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FOR
AMERICANS

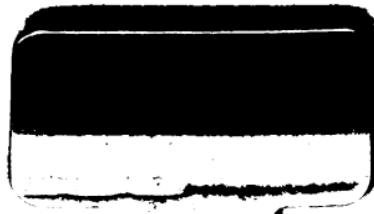


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**WILLIAM B. CAIRNS
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ETIQUETTE FOR AMERICANS

ETIQUETTE

FOR

AMERICANS

BY

A WOMAN OF FASHION



HERBERT S. STONE & COMPANY
CHICAGO & NEW YORK
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Preface

The actual need of an up-to-date manual of American etiquette is evinced by the repeated and clamorous demands for such a manual entered at every bookseller's and publisher's in the land. It is shown, too, by the almost pathetic attempts of those who would gladly perform their social duties and pleasures in order if they could, but are prevented by their ignorance of the best usage in such matters. To many judicial and intellectual minds, to those employed in engrossing pursuits, from which hours spent in social intercourse are grudgingly doled, to

NO ONE EXEMPT

those unsocially inclined by nature and training, the word etiquette may seem an unused frivolity, something flouted and jeered.

Yet there comes a time in the life of the most engrossed, the most disdainful, when a knowledge of the amenities of social life has to be scrambled for desperately in books, or learned hastily from polished friends. Every man has to conform, however infrequently, to polite usage. No man is impervious to the ceremonies attending courtship, marriage, entertaining for business purposes, or having to do the correct thing at some stage of his career. The story of the Chicago gentleman who took two coats with him to a breakfast given a Spanish princess shows that even great minds must descend occasionally to the level of

SOCIAL DUTIES IMPORTANT

social ease. Men's wives cannot be depended upon to arrange everything for them, and some men have no wives.

In other countries, social duties are as important as business duties, in certain classes of life. Boys are taught that, no matter how distasteful ceremony is, there are times when it comes first in line of duty. The result is that these lands produce men versed, from school and home discipline, in the social arts and graces; while our youths of twenty-one are, as a rule, hobble-de-hoys, ashamed of having any manners at all, and they suffer accordingly.

If young people could know that the more they learn early, the less they will have to learn, and by bitter experience, late, it would be a valuable task mastered. No one can afford to scorn etiquette, which is only, after all, good

DIGNITY OF POLITENESS

manners; and once become familiar, no time has to be wasted in worrying over it, or provoking ridicule without it.

Let us, therefore, proceed on the assumption that it is as essential to men as to women to be familiar with the fine art of living—if for one thing only that they may attend, with greater tact and less danger of failure, to the utilitarian branches; that they may be able, without poignant anguish, to change a business environment for a center of petticoat and small talk, and may not consume any superfluous time afterward in groaning over the mistakes they have made. That it is not half as undignified to be easily courteous, or to use the right fork at dinner, as to be blundering about, wondering what to do next, no matter if you do con-

ETIQUETTE FOR AMERICANS

sider those who know dudes, popinjays and asses. That there is no ordinance in the social legislation which does not confer comfort for obedience, and no well-established usage that has not been founded for that reason.

There might have been an excuse, or some semblance of a cause, for our borrowing an etiquette from England, while our own habits were unfounded. There is certainly none now. American ways are running in well-oiled grooves; American customs, American hours are the arbiters, and the only arbiters, of America's code of manners.

Five o'clock tea, an institution now general in our larger cities, and even in some of our smaller towns, we got direct from England; but we have made it our own. It makes afternoon

DEBT TO ENGLAND

calls easy and informal; it has revolutionized the hours of calling, which used to be barbarously set for the morning, and kept men from ever paying anything but evening visits—now, thank heaven, utterly tabooed. We owe England gratitude for this last change, and can never yield up sufficient thanks for it; but with those exceptions, our ways are largely our own. The late dinner, to be sure, is an English innovation; but one cannot be quite sure whether that is an unmixed boon or not. An eight o'clock dinner interferes with theatre-going completely, for in this country we have not the perennial curtain-raisers preceding the main play of the evening; it interferes with men's business habits of a morning; it possibly impairs constitutions. For the later one dines, the

ABSURDITY OF COPYING

more heavily one dines, and the later one sits up. In London, where fashionable dinners are at nine, which is only equivalent to eight here, there is some reason for the hour. It is daylight until nine o'clock in the season; and men do not have to get up early in the mornings; even business-offices do not open before ten o'clock, and of course tradesmen are not considered in the social scheme there.

And that makes another absurdity apparent in our copying English ways. In this country, no matter what social distinctions we have set up, they are not on the same lines as those in England. So-called tradesmen are among our richest entertainers; we draw the line at something very different, no one knows exactly what it is, but it is not a trade-mark that chalks the boundary.

AMERICAN CODE SUFFICIENT

If it were, most of our best society would go outside the pale. People, as a rule, in this country do what they can afford to do; they do not try to struggle without means to keep pace with the rich. In England, the poorest often close their doors on the most prosperous, and scrimp and save to perform social duties that are let fly to the four winds here, barring the ability to perform them.

All things considered, then, the American code is sufficient to itself, and needs no support from England. It is not necessary to speak here of the difference in the training of girls of the two countries, for they are growing less and less; or of the frank and outspoken indelicacy with which they are put on the matrimonial market in England. It suffices to say that our

NO LEISURE CLASS

community is big and strong, and old enough to carry its own weight; and that its conditions are such as to require it to frame its own special laws. And that, while our men are still active workers, it is foolishness for us to try to establish leisure classes, hunting communities, unsuitable hours, and general affectation, which is discomfort as well as stupidity.

Many excellent guides to manners have been brought out at different periods; but manners change with times, and new exigencies require new rules. The game of golf, for instance, was not known in this country when the very last book on etiquette was written; and there is a code for that. Bicycling is another exercise that brings with it the need of a set of formulæ. All sorts of old-fashioned

NATURE'S NOBLEMAN

customs have been modified or changed. Some inexorable rules of ancient date have been done away with altogether. Others, like paying visits in the evening, and wearing a bonnet after seven o'clock in a private house, have been abolished in city circles, although still allowable in the country.

To keep pace with these modifications is by no means undignified. "A mon's a mon for a' that," even if he stumbles headlong into a drawing-room, in a blue smock, which covers a kind heart, an hour late for dinner; but every one agrees that nature's nobleman, entering gracefully, appropriately clothed, and arriving at a seasonable moment, is a far more pleasing sight. One may thoroughly respect the German professor who, in reply to the injured hostess' inquiry

LEARNING BY ROTE

for the reason he broke a dinner-engagement of two weeks' standing, blandly answered: "But, madam, I was not hungry;" and yet for dining companions one chooses other than the candid savant with the best intentions in the world, but no manners.

Manners, like everything else in life, have to be learned by rule. When once the rules are firmly fixed, they may be slightly eased, at times; some persons of great poise and enormous fortune may afford to relax them a good deal. But no one, no matter what his station or means, can be allowed to ignore customs altogether. The Prince of Wales may trample on the feelings of his subjects privately; he is hide-bound in conventionalities when he is out officially.

Familiarity with persons may breed

FREE TO ACT

contempt; familiarity with form breeds grace of manner and ease. No one can be perfect in deportment who has to stop every minute to think how to do things. If an afternoon visitor is uncertain as to whether he is to leave his hat on the hall-table or bring it into the drawing-room with him, he may be the most charming man in the world, but he becomes embarrassed and awkward, setting his hat down, clutching it up again, and occupied with the problem of bestowing it, when he enters. In order to be free to do oneself justice, one should do the little ceremonies automatically. Who has not seen a tall man circling round a lady, offering her first one arm and then the other in his dilemma, as dinner is announced? Just that little hitch makes him lurch like an ele-

ORDER FIRST LAW

phant and forget what he was going to say.

There are deeper matters than these for which society is constituted; but society would be too busy arranging the minor details to attend to the big things, if order were not observed. Ask a stage-manager what would happen at a tremendous crisis of passion if the heroine had not rehearsed every minutest movement, every tear, every gust of emotion. And social affairs are much like plays: in order that they may go off smoothly, each one must know his part.

This book is intended for those persons who perceive the value of doing even the smallest things in life well; who do not care to figure as awkward or ignorant, no matter what their true worth. Other books on similar sub-

REASON NOT INFALLIBLE

jects have gone deeply into the æsthetics of good breeding—the subtlety of kindness.: it is the purpose of this only to disclose, not so much the morals nor the philosophy of good manners, as the formulated rules for their observance. The reasons may appeal in good time to the accomplished man or woman of the world; and they may never do so. It is the intention of this writer to set forth the proper paths to follow, whether common-sense dictates the route or not. And, although it is only fair to state that most rules of etiquette were dictated originally by common-sense and comfort, it is equally generous to admit that many others are solely arbitrary. It is well to avoid extremes; and this is about the only piece of advice that can be given as to selection. You wear a small bonnet in piercing

DO OR DIE

cold, out-of-doors, and an enormous hat
with feathers in a house, because it is
the fashion.

Yours not to reason why,
Yours not to make reply,

yours but to do or be unfashionable
with the rest of the four hundred.

CHAPTER I

ETIQUETTE VERSUS FASHION

The difference between fashion and etiquette may be defined as like that existing between weather and climate; one lasts only a few days, and the other lasts all the time.

Etiquette, with modifications and ramifications, to suit changing and new conditions, is a permanent institution, while fashion is more or less a matter of whim. Fashion may make men and women bores; etiquette can never lower their dignity, nor encourage them in hurting the feelings of others. Fashion may prescribe that everybody shall be suddenly ridiculous; etiquette

NEVER BE LATE

prevents him from making himself so. The two, it is seen, sometimes clash, in which cases it is always safe to lean on the more reliable of the two institutions. When in doubt, find out the established etiquette of the thing, rather than the fleeting fashion. To give an example: It has been the fashion for two or three years to be late at formal dinners. In order to accommodate herself to this vagary, which she practices herself, possibly, in her turn, the hostess orders her dinner half an hour later than her invitations read, with the result that those punctilious guests, who would not be guilty of a rudeness, were fashion to prescribe it four times over—come on time, and are kept waiting. The moral of this might seem to turn in fashion's favor; but not unless a temporary inconvenience is set against

NEVER BE RUDE

a fixed principle. The person who appears at the right minute has the satisfaction of knowing himself or herself to be well-bred; and when the fashion comes of being too early for dinner, as it may do any day, those correct persons will have their revenge. A rude fashion is never to be followed; and etiquette never sanctions the following of it.

As for the thousands of little things, erroneously called minor, for they are important to comfort, which have to be observed and thought about every day —learn them, if they come in your way, like the multiplication table. Find out, if you are a lady, the proper side of the carriage to take when you are driving with a gentleman; assure yourself as to the time to take off your gloves when you go out to dinner;

BE WISE AND CONFORM

acquaint yourself with the smallest details of reception and service, if you are giving one. The elegance and ease of the best whip in the world may be rudely destroyed by failure to observe a simple rule as to the side of the road to drive on; so in any one of the myriad crises and opportunities of our social living, not to know is to be awkward, and to fail.

You will be wise, then, to be informed on points of every-day etiquette, the noting of which makes, and the ignoring of which mars, social intercourse in cities. And first it will be most appropriate to consider the general rules.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCING AS AN ART

Introduction, by virtue of the preliminary character of its process, as well as its name, properly comes up first for consideration in a systematized manual of etiquette. It is a ceremony upon which by no means all agree, for Anglo-mania has crept in, and made our American idea of hospitality, with its theory of making guests comfortable—ridiculous. Yet the Anglo-mania was a reaction from a profusely overdone custom, rife in this country, of introducing everybody, appropriately and inappropriately, with and without

REACTION FROM BAD HABIT

reason. Time was when a man might stay away from a general gathering, where now he may move about easily, for fear of being pompously introduced to somebody he had excellent reasons for not wishing to know; and, worse still, for fear of having his wife, his mother, his sister or his daughter subjected to similar infliction. To "make everybody acquainted" was a noisome custom of early entertaining in American cities and towns. In small communities, it did not so much matter; in large cities, it got to be a scourge. Women would introduce others in church, at a chance street encounter, in cars and omnibuses. They had an idea it was rude not to do it.

Ultra-fashionable circles have now gone to the other extreme—in New York, for instance. Because in London

SOMETIMES EMBARRASSING

one is not supposed to be asked, or endured, at a house at which one does not know every one, introductions are waived, sometimes to the infinite embarrassment of a stranger; but, if the stranger only knew it, it is because he or she has the right to presuppose the same condition that the hostess does, and speak to any one in the house without offense. If there has been no formal introduction, there need be no further acquaintance; but it saves discomfort at close quarters, at dinner-tables, for instance, to speak naturally and without introduction.

It is not an American idea, however, to omit introductions when they make intercourse easier; and as that lack does certainly cause embarrassment, it should not be countenanced for a moment. A lady who, sitting at a tea-

FORMULA FOR THE DEED

table in her own drawing-room, receives her friends by invitation, has a duty to these friends; and that duty is to make them as comfortable as possible. She has no right to take it for granted that friends of a common friend are friends of one another.

In introducing, the formula in polite society is: "Mrs. Brown, may I present Mr. Jones?" and not to introduce the lady to the gentleman, for obvious reasons. An incident appropriate to this subject is recalled. A very youthful bride was taken to a small town in a Western State to live—a town in which her husband had a position under the government. At an evening-party given in honor of the couple, the hostess tucked her feminine guest of honor under her arm, and dragged her along the sides of the

BAD QUARTER OF AN HOUR

room, presenting her, as they went, to the young men of the town, who sat in their seats against the wall, without moving except possibly to squirm. The good will and hospitable intention of the lady in charge of the ceremonies were undoubted. The young woman in whose honor the entertainment was given nearly fainted from mortification, and the husband swore vengeance at the whole town that had perpetrated the insult in the person of one of its representatives.

There are many persons who say they cannot remember which is to be presented to the other, the lady or the gentleman. This argues dense ignorance of propriety; but it is more probable that embarrassment causes forgetfulness, at the moment of introducing, of the order of things. The

LITTLE SPEECHES GONE BY

person performing the ceremony of introduction, which should be done simply, and without flourishes, says: "Mrs. or Miss A., may I introduce (or present) Mr. B?" Never "make you acquainted with," nor "I want you to know, Mr. B." Nor should the ceremony be made variegated, or prefaced by flowery speeches, as many hostesses like to show their originality by doing. Nor should the person presenting or the presentee, under any circumstances, murmur: "Pleased to meet you," or "Happy to know you." "How do you do?" is quite enough to start with, unless there are very cogent reasons for being expressive; and then moderation is advised in mixed circles. Emotion should be reserved for strictly confidential meetings. "The little speech," for which Americans have become

DO NOT SPECIFY

famous, is a species of humbug which, it is pleasant to state, is going out. It is foolish, if not superfluous, to say, "Come again," or, "So glad to have met you," to a new acquaintance. If you are in a fashionable set, he will not come again till you and your husband have shown some recognition of his visit; and *she* will not until you have returned hers!

Above all things, do not introduce anybody as "my friend," Mr. A., or Miss B. There is nothing more barbarous. Ladies introduce their governesses and their companions, their nurses, patronizingly, as their "friends;" and those dependants, or possibly social inferiors, squirm under the title. Don't talk about visiting "friends," or being out at "a friend's house," or worse still, at "a friend's home," what-

LET THE CHANCE ARRIVE

ever you do. It is taken for granted you visit only friends, and if you can't mention names, either make no reference to the guilty parties, or get round the case in some other way. But this belongs to conversation. Only, one never can miss an opportunity to inveigh against the constant use of "friend" and "home."

Do not interrupt a conversation to introduce. An opportunity will come in a minute; or if it doesn't, and there is no particular reason why these two should meet, and if they are not sitting near each other, skip the introduction until a more convenient season, or forever. People are often embarrassed by being lugged forth conspicuously to be introduced to somebody they never heard of, and may never see again. Use common-sense and discretion about

NO CRIME IN NOT HEARING

introduction, as about everything else. If persons are over-sensitive, they are sure to be hurt about something all the time, and you cannot anticipate every possible contingency.

There is one very common *contre-temps*—an accident that happens to everybody at one time or other, like dodging at a street-corner—and that is, the failure to hear a name on being introduced. It is nothing in the world to be ashamed of; it is morally certain to occur; yet people speak of it as if it were a cataclysm, and blush, or tattle about the wonderful way in which they “carried it off.” Some noble souls boldly say, “I didn’t catch the name,” which is of all things most wooden. It is quite easy to say, “Would you mind telling me who it is I have the honor of meeting?” or, if it is a young person

FORGETTING A NAME IS WORSE

with a jolly air, "I couldn't hear Mrs. C.; I shall have to ask your name," or anything that occurs to you but a cut-and-dried phrase, like, "I didn't quite catch the name." As if you were playing a game! This "going through the floor," on account of a perfectly natural every-day occurrence, is too silly. If you can't overcome so slight a difficulty easily, you are not fit to be out. Forgetting a name while in the very act of introducing is another matter, and far more serious, as it makes a poor compliment to the person for whom you are performing the office. But if it can't be helped, it can't; and you must make your apology as graceful as you can. Remembering names is a social accomplishment, and the few who master it are sure of success, at least as tacticians. Don't avail your-

NO CASUAL INTRODUCTIONS

self of the time-worn jargon, however, whatever you do: "Your face is perfectly familiar, but I have forgotten your name." It is probably untrue, to begin with; you won't be believed, whether it is or not, and it is a tiresome piece of idiocy at best.

It is not etiquette, but dragged-in politeness, to introduce two persons at a perfectly casual meeting, as in a public conveyance, unless there is a special reason for doing so, like long desire on the part of both to meet, or an encounter on your way to perform the introduction; or something of that kind. Never introduce in church, even at the very door, or on the steps. It is not only far-fetched, it is improper. Do not introduce on doorsteps, if you happen to find somebody waiting there that you know and the person with you does not.

FOLLY OF PRESUMPTION

If two persons have lived in the same town for a long time, be very chary of introducing them, and wait for one or the other to ask, and then find out if it will be agreeable. There is probably some reason why they do not recognize each other.

At a dance, invariably ask a young girl if you may present a man before you venture to do it. If he is directly behind you, she may find it awkward to refuse; but he *should not* be there; and it is your place to find some excuse, if the girl says no. It is mean to take advantage of the helpless; and a girl, at such times, is like a bird in a cage. Because "a friend" has arrived in town and you like him, and "want him to have a good time," or are afraid of offending him, it does not follow that every fastidious young lady in the

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION

hall that you select must be victimized to make a holiday for your importation, or to serve your credit with your friends.

Letters of introduction are unknown quantities to many, and white elephants to both recipients and presenters often; and many requests have been made for an official guide on the subject. The code is simple; and it is the abuse of it that has made confusion.

Letters of introduction are too common, to begin with. They are sometimes requested without sufficient reason, either from acquaintance with the asker or the giver; they are often offered in such a way as to cause embarrassment in refusing, and equal embarrassment in employing. It is a safe rule to ask for few, to accept few, and to give few. Providing oneself

ONLY PROPER WHEN REQUIRED

with a batch of letters, which one has not time or inclination to use, is a kind of insult to two persons; and yet it is a common thing to see done. When a letter of introduction is required, or seems desirable, the giver should write a letter besides that introducing the friend or acquaintance, to the person who is requested to be civil to the introduced person. The form of the note of introduction should be, of course, simple, but depends upon the relations between the parties of the first, second and third parts for its character, whether formal or the reverse. Then write like this to ordinary acquaintances:

My dear Salter:

If you can find an opportunity of doing my friend, Edward Gray, of Boston, who is a stranger in Triptown,

NO BUSINESS ALLUSIONS

any kindness, you will be adding one to the list of favors I have already on the debit side of my books. Gray was a classmate of mine; and I shall not tell you what a good fellow he is, because you will find that out for yourself.

Sincerely yours,

James Kent.

Business appendices and allusions to the health of the family should not be put into such notes.

Another and brusquer form between intimate friends is this:

My dear Bob:

This is to warn you against Ned Gray, the bearer of this, who will bunko you if he gets a chance. If you put him up at the Club, warn the fellows. Ned married my wife's cousin, and was considered a good fellow when we were at Cambridge together; but you know the temptations that beset a

FORMS OF LETTERS

business man in Boston! Lock up your valuables, ask Ned to dinner, and he may amuse you. But don't ask him to sing! Your anxious friend,

Jim K.

The letter sent privately to the friend must state the case actually; whereas both the other notes are mere forms of acceding to a request. No honest man would send an unpresentable person to another; so it may be safely inferred that, taking the first and more formal instance, this is what Mr. Kent would write to his friend:

My dear Salter:

Since you were here in June, Chinchilla has changed a good deal. Building seems to have had an impetus, and business has improved accordingly. I was glad to hear, etc., etc.

I gave a fellow named Ned Gray a letter to you yesterday, hoping it might

NO EXCUSE FOR HUMBUG

be of mutual service. I knew him—not very well—at college; he was a first-rate chap, as far as I knew, and is still. He is connected with us by marriage; and at all family gatherings—the only occasions upon which I have met him much, we live so far apart—has seemed a particularly nice fellow. He is entertaining, and sings very well. I hope you may find it convenient to show him some attention, without putting yourself to too much trouble.

Thanking you in advance, I remain
—etc., etc.

If you have to write a cautious note, warning your friend against the person introduced, you are committing an offense against decency in giving him a letter, and there is no proper form for such a mean piece of trickery, which has, unfortunately, been achieved by some cowards. The idea of the second

EXPLANATORY PRIVATE NOTE

letter is simply to explain who the person introduced is; a thing impossible in a letter borne by the subject.

A woman naturally makes her letter a little more effusive, but she should not. This style is about the thing for the note of introduction:

My dear Mrs. Bolyn:

I take great pleasure in introducing to you, through this letter, Mrs. George Gott, of St. Eleno. Mrs. Gott goes to Triptown on business; and if you could lighten her stay in the Saratoga, hotel life being notoriously lonely, you would be making me, as well as Mrs. Gott, happy.

Yours, etc., etc.,

Mattie Brown.

The private letter should explain that Mrs. Gott is a widow, a divorcée, or whatever she is, so as to avoid embarrassment, and state her class of per-

SEND THE LETTER

son, old, young, delicate, or given to music, or golf, or what not.

To interrupt the social or domestic routine of a family at the height of a season is an ungracious business; and often a letter of introduction brings nothing to friend or foe. These letters should be written only for persons whose acquaintance is expected to be pleasing, or for those who are utter strangers, and who need attentions to make their stay in a strange place bearable.

It is obvious that taking a letter of introduction oneself leaves the person to whom it is addressed no loophole of escape, in case escape is desired. There might be conditions under which the addressee is laboring which make it impossible or unadvisable to extend his (or her) acquaintance at the moment. A wedding might be imminent in the

LEAVE A LOOPHOLE

family, and daily festivities in process; there might be a shadow of illness, or disgrace, or worry of some sort, or even death approaching. Time should be given for the receiver of the letter of introduction to consider what to do, how and when to do it. In the case of a mere acquaintance sending an effusive and tiresome person disposed to be familiar, it might be thought wise to send a formal invitation for a somewhat remote date; it might be deemed prudent to go slowly in the matter, at all events. And there have been known unscrupulous men and women who would introduce anybody; and weak-kneed, good-natured others who do not know how to refuse. A loophole should be left to the unsuspecting. And besides all that, to carry your own credentials is undignified.

RULES FOR LADIES

Send the letter of introduction, man or woman, whichever you are, and follow it up, if you are a man, by calling the same day; or, if you like, you can leave your card with the note, and do not call, until invited to do so. In the case of married people, if you are a man, the husband calls at your club or hotel. You return the visit, unless, as will probably occur, you at once receive an invitation to dine, drive, lunch or sup. If it is a lady alone, upon whom you pay your respects, you wait to be summoned before calling a second time. If it is a lady who bears the letter of introduction, there need be less ceremony, and usually civilities are quickly in train.

It seems superfluous to remark that a letter of introduction demands immediate recognition in some form.

PAYING VISITS

If illness or other cause prevents the required attention, an excuse must be sent in place of an invitation, or a visit.

CHAPTER III

CALLING

After introductions, visits—as we commonly term them in this country, "calls"—come next in preliminary sequence. To "make a call" has an inelegant robustness of tone to one not used to hearing it; but Americans cannot plead that they are not used to hearing it. And the expression is not only general, but universal here. "Paying visits," the neat substitute for the rougher phrase, is not yet in colloquial use.

Visiting or calling hours are now limited, and most sensibly, to a restricted time in the afternoon. No one not

HOURS OF CALLING

privileged, on pressing business, or extremely intimate, would think of invading a household before three o'clock. And as it is only of formal visiting we are speaking—"running in" to friends' or neighbors' houses familiarly need not be mentioned in connection with the subject. So great a nuisance did the old-fashioned habit of callers, of spreading themselves thereon whole days, some people calling in the mornings, others in the afternoons, still others evenings, and all on any day in the week, become, that the custom of restricting hours to certain parts of days, and then to certain days of the week, was started in self-preservation; and now, in large cities, is general. No one can be offended who is refused at half-past two on a Tuesday, when "Mondays, three to

DUTY OF HOSTESS

six," is plainly engraven on a *carte de visite*. The hostess, on the other hand, who excuses herself within these limits, will find it hard to make her peace with disgusted visitors, who have stretched a point to conform to restrictions made by the offender herself.

It is a good rule to stay only fifteen minutes at a formal, at any rate a first call, unless, of course, urged to stay longer for some special reason. It is an equally good rule to depart as the room becomes crowded and talking grows more difficult, at all events, to relinquish one's place near the hostess. Tea is universally served on calling days in all well-regulated houses; but if you are obliged to go very early, say at three o'clock, it is good form to decline the offer of tea made specially for you, not only because of the

TEA TOO EARLY

unseasonable hour, but because it makes a great deal of trouble. This sounds like superfluous advice; but most persons who go out calling much will relate at least one instance of some absent-minded female, who, straying in without regard to the time, accepts the offer of tea at three o'clock, waits till it comes in, and then departs—finding how early it is—withoutr drinking a drop. Of such is the kingdom of callers.

"Little speeches" are now ruled out pretty generally in the routine of calling. It is foolish to pretend that "calling" is more than routine; and the more quietly one enters, and the more unobtrusively departs, the better pleased will the hostess be. Above all, don't keep her standing an hour, while you lecture or "orate," or go

SENDING IN OF CARDS

over somebody's history, while everybody else sits about looking foolish.

Put your card on a convenient place in the hall, or on the tray the servant holds out for you, and mention your name to the manservant, if there is one. A man or a maid usually takes the card on a tray, and stands holding the curtains (perhaps) aside, for you to enter, speaking your name audibly at the same time. Sending or taking the card in before you to the drawing-room on "afternoons," is obsolete.

A man does exactly the same as a woman, except that he takes off his overcoat, if he wears one, in the hall. His hat and stick he also deposits outside. This rule is not generally observed, but should be. The drawing-room is no place for the hat; and of

ASKING TO CALL

course the hat and stick go and stay together.

A man in this country must be asked to call, before he may venture to do so. To take away the awkwardness or suspicion of forwardness from such an act, it may be stated that a lady usually knows when a gentleman wishes to call, and if he has been out of his way to be civil to her, she is safe in asking him. He then calls as soon as possible after the invitation is given. After that, if it is a family of much entertaining, he will receive, if his visit has been agreeable, an invitation to dinner. After that, again, he calls within a week, and then he may be summoned for informal occasions, etc. He is an acquaintance.

This rule is not for young girls, whose mothers must do the asking.

BUSINESS MEN'S HOURS

Business men cannot pay visits very easily in the afternoons. In these days, however, a man, on an ordinary week day, is allowed to call in a brown, blue or any colored coat, fancy waistcoat, and derby hat. And he can be admitted up to six o'clock. He, therefore, will usually be able to find half an hour out of the week; and there is always Sunday. Few houses are closed to visitors Sunday afternoons. There is really no excuse for men's delinquencies, especially, and above all, if they have accepted invitations or favors of any sort from ladies.

In dealing with the subject of visiting in general, the receiving party is always a woman, of course. Men receive visits from men at their club, or their offices, and in England, and now possibly in New York, there is a distinct

OFFICE CALLS

etiquette for these ceremonies. And in that respect, of amenities between men, we should do well to learn from our British cousins. The slapdash and freedom of many men's friendly calls in business offices is disgusting and without palliation. No decent man has a right to see a stranger in his shirt-sleeves, with his hat on, and his feet on the table. In England a man would no more keep his hat on in another man's office than in his wife's drawing-room; and it would be well if that one formality were observed and enforced here.

But as for formal visiting among men, it is never done at their houses, if they are married. That is to say, it is always the wife who receives, not the husband. He goes out, if he has any sense, and makes calls himself. For we have borrowed another sensible cus-

MEN'S DUTIES IN CALLING

tom from England; and that is that when a gentleman, no matter if he is married, has received hospitality at a lady's hands, he is quite capable of paying a visit to show his personal appreciation. It is not necessary for a man to relegate all the visiting to his wife.

The imposing and important question of its being necessary to call (and thus return your own visit!) after a five o'clock tea, or at home, is not mooted in communities where there is any knowledge of society modes. But as in some small towns, and some large cities, of provincial experience only, the point is everlastingly being raised, it may as well be said once, and for all, that it is an utter absurdity to feel obliged to make one call after another. The rash person who issues eight hun-

CALLING AFTER A TEA

dred invitations to a tea, has eight hundred calls to return; and if she does not know this simple fact she has been more than rash, she has been ignorant. An exception may be made, as it always is made in any case, for that matter, in favor of old or delicate ladies, who cannot return eight hundred calls; and sometimes, when the hostess makes a special occasion of a tea, and has a set programme of music. But even then calling again is a gratuitous civility, and by no means expected.

You announce that you will be at home between certain hours; your friends, in walking costume, wait upon you. In the words of a slang phrase, it is "up to you;" and yours is the next move.

Nothing excuses delay in returning a

PAYING DUTY-VISITS

first visit within a few days but going out of town, or illness. Nothing can be taken in place of a call after a dinner, a luncheon, a supper, or theater-party, unless, as said before, you are ill or out of town. A card may be sent with a word of regret, and nothing is as easy, really, as attention of this kind, which invariably pleases the recipient.

Club life and bicycling, and many other informal matters, have modified the obligation of persons who meet constantly; but it is always better to overdo the polite than to underdo it; and a call after each and every act of civility is a neat courtesy for a woman to pay, and indispensable for a man.

The custom of turning up (or down) corners of cards is no longer followed; nor is it considered necessary for a card to be left for each member of a large

CUSTOMS ABOUT WRAPS

family, except on most formal occasions. Ladies who drive when they pay visits usually have a very heavy wrap on in cold weather, which they leave in the carriage. But when walking in a thick jacket, it is allowable, more comfortable, and certainly healthier, to take it off in the hall.

Sending cards by footmen is not an American custom, and has no precedent in this country, and no excuse. It is one thing to copy foreign form when it is sensible, and another to ape it without reason.

Leaving other people's cards is a rather precarious business, and done at the caller's risk! It is not pleasant to meet your hostess driving in just as you sail out with the consciousness of having done a good stroke for a friend. In case the returning householder

EVENING VISITS GONE OUT

makes inquiries, and finds only one visit has been paid, there may be no particular harm done; but that depends upon the sensitiveness of the lady.

An abomination that has been done away with in large cities is the evening call. In small communities, where dinner is early, and the engagements of a whole set are well known, the evening call holds its own, and possibly fills the requirements better than if it were made in the busy hours of day. But for those who can conform to late hours for dinner and dinner-parties, the evening visit is an impossibility, or ought to be. It is a great nuisance, at any rate. The visitor breaks into a dinner, it may be, or intercepts the family just starting for the theater, or for a dinner-party at another house, if he calls as early as eight o'clock. Only intimate

CALLING IMPERATIVE

friends are allowed to call in the evenings in circles where the conventionalities are observed. And it is for such that our humble suggestions are intended. Yet many and many a man lays himself open to strictures he does not otherwise deserve by appearing at the house of a mere acquaintance when it is most inconvenient to receive him.

The system of calling is one that wastes much time, and is rather senseless. But there seems to be no other institution to take its place; and as a code of signals it has its uses. Without it, it is difficult to see how lists would be recruited for invitations, or any entertaining done in order.

CHAPTER IV

INVITATIONS

Invitations are of two kinds: formal and informal. From the nature of a manual of etiquette, it might be inferred that only formal invitations come properly into it; but there is so much confusion as to the occasion for informality and the reverse, that some suggestions may not be superfluous. Invitations often offend by their informality, when there is no particular reason why they should not be formal. Eleventh hour and verbal invitations, and invitations by telephone should not be administered except to most intimate friends; and then they are outside the pale of

VERBAL ASKING UNSAFE

formal etiquette. When they are inevitable, they should be explained in minutest detail, and apologized for properly.

Verbal invitations are dangerous, and have been known to lead to serious complications, even involving the breaking up of acquaintances, if not actually of friendships. A verbal invitation is given hurriedly, usually. You are making up a party for a large dinner, and you wish to secure some person who is apt to be in demand. You ask him or her by word of mouth at a party or concert, or in the street. Invariably follow up this casual asking by a note in due form, stating the hour and day of your own affair to which you have bidden the personage. This is a good rule to make absolute, even for intimate friends.

INVITATIONS BY TELEPHONE

As to invitations by telephone, for anything other than informal engagements, it must be owned that they are hopelessly vulgar. They should be the last resort. Invitations to bicycle or to play golf may be transmitted in this way, and the telephone is a blessing often in adjusting details, or making explanations; but for most social matters the use of the telephone is questionable, at best. Many women will stand with aching feet and irritated brow at a telephone for half an hour rather than write a note which would take four minutes, stamping, posting and all.

Always keep a written list of your own invitations, declinations and acceptances, as well as of your engagements. The hour is important, and should always be registered.

MAKE YOUR NOTES SIMPLE

In inviting, beware of too much scope in wording your cards or notes. People who entertain regularly and frequently have cards engraved with spaces for names and dates. This fact shows that originality is not expected in the wording of invitations. There are ambitious individuals, nevertheless, who strain to arrive at brilliancy, and sometimes, unfortunately, achieve nothing but vagueness. Sometimes they are only silly; as when a young woman gayly wrote, "Come and nibble a sweetbread on Thursday." The best way is the simplest, in such matters. There are formulæ for invitations. Wedding cards are furnished for choice at the stationer's, but the formula for dinner may be given:

Mr. and Mrs. F. C. D. request the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. E. B. A.'s

FORM OF REPLY

company at dinner on Thursday, February 8, at 8 o'clock.

It is a commentary on the manners of the period that many such notes bear the legend, "R. S. V. P.," or the plain phrase, "An answer is requested." It would seem that only Kaffirs or Hottentots should require such reminders; but it is safe to argue that unless frequent lapses from politeness had occurred the reminder would not have been thought necessary.

In replying, one must write out the note, of course, no blanks being provided for answers. Repeat the principal points of the invitation, thus:

Mr. and Mrs. E. B. A accept with pleasure Mr. and Mrs. F. C. D.'s kind invitation for Thursday, February 8, at 8 o'clock. (And do not forget the 8 o'clock.)

KEEP YOUR NOTES

There is a discussion in polite circles about the propriety of using figures and abbreviations in formal notes. Many women write out "eighth" and "seventeenth," and the month. But it is a point strained, and is not the really correct thing, for that reason. You are not supposed to grudge the time spent on a note of this sort, or to be in a hurry, which is vulgar, but neither are you supposed to be affected, nor to waste time, both of which faults are more vulgar. Write "Feb." or "Feb'y 8," not "8th," but "8th" or "eighth Feb'y."

Keep the notes until the party is over. You may have occasion to refer to it, to verify a date, or excuse yourself for a supposed mistake.

There used to be an idea that it was inelegant to send cards and invitations

SENDING BY POST

by post. Men were dispatched with baskets; if no men were employed in the family, the caterer—for a large affair—or a hired messenger was sent. In cities of long distances, this involves expense and delay, also embarrassment, in case the invited have moved, or are out of town. The government undertakes to deliver all deliverable letters, and your responsibility ends at the post-office. Even invitations to small dinners are sent nowadays by post.

The question of selecting guests is an important one. It is the rocks upon which many would-be successful entertainers have gone down.

In sending out cards to a wedding and wedding-breakfast, one must be guided by the size of the church and house, as has been said; in calling, or announcement, cards, no one should be

NO QUARRELS RECOGNIZED

omitted or forgotten, who is on any terms of visiting acquaintanceship. If it is uncomfortable to be general in this matter, it is far wiser not to send out general cards. As for small entertainments, there is sure to be some clashing. No one can follow up everybody's likes, dislikes, or quarrels. If two persons sit beside each other who "do not speak," they *must* speak for the occasion, that is all, and the discipline will do them good. They owe the duty of decency to their host or hostess, and the duty of self-control to themselves.

But there must be judicious selection. With eight persons, the choice is necessary. The feeling of give-and-take is rather barbarous, but there is a sense of obligation to be fulfilled, and it is better to ask first to your dinners the people who have been good enough (or

ALL OF ONE AGE

bad enough) to ask you to theirs. One elderly married couple, one not so elderly, and a young man and a young woman, besides the host and hostess, is a good list. Do not commit the vulgarity of asking all "young people," or all "old people." Nothing bores either the old or the young so much, and nothing is ruder or cruder. Remember that society is of one age, and that a girl who is ready to be at large in it is no longer a baby to be humored and choose invariably boys and girls of her own age to talk to. Society was invented for cheerful and improving intercourse, not for the prattle of infancy.

It is a good plan to send out invitations for several dinners at once—not the dinners at once, but the notes. Then any disposed to be offended will

ASKING FOR INVITATIONS

be appeased; and you can fill up interstices better. Make your dates plain, if you do this; and be careful of your answers!

Begging for invitations is a risky proceeding, which should be indulged in sparingly. Extra men, if desirable, or dancers, are nearly always in requisition at a ball, even if it is a private one; and one is nearly always justified in asking to bring one. Even this may be overdone, however; and hostesses have been annoyed often at having superfluous men at cotillons, or "germans" (so-called because the dance is French!), when particular arrangements, such as buying favors, have been made for a certain number. Do not ask to bring a man unless he dances. Non-dancing men are a source of unhappiness to dancing girls, who

NEVER ASK FOR DINNER

are often monopolized and made to sit out by them, and they are in the way. On no account ask to bring a resident of the place in which the party is given. If such a person were needed, the invitation would have been sent from headquarters.

Of course, it is out of the question to ask for an invitation for anybody to a formal or set dinner. It is better to decline altogether than to commit such a breach of form. Tables are arranged carefully beforehand, and the slightest change might necessitate great bother. If, as often happens nowadays, a woman wishes to accept a dinner invitation without her husband, both having been asked, and he having gone out of town, or not caring to dine out, the woman should decline, and give her reason. If the hostess wishes to

INVITING A SET TASK

invite her alone, she can then do so. But to write, "May I come without my husband?" is bad form. Often it is the man who is hard to get, rather than the woman. At all events, let the dinner-giver decide.

In this country inviting is not the duty it is considered in England. There, every woman who starts out, or keeps up, entertaining, expects to ask many disagreeable persons to her house, and to go through her visiting-list like a stoic. Once fairly established as an acquaintance, by the usual preliminaries of calling on a lady and receiving a visit in return from her husband, the lady feels obliged to ask you to dinner. A Tea or an At Home does not answer. Dinner is what you have a right to expect. There is no such obligation nor penance in this

BACHELORS' RIGHTS

country yet; but in some large cities the custom is creeping in, and bachelors are insisting upon their "rights." One young man asserted himself boldly not long ago in this wise: A lady of his acquaintance, who entertained assiduously, and was therefore open to some blame in the matter, airily reproved him for not having been to see her for some time. "I have called a dozen times, or more," he rejoined, with spirit, "and you have never asked me to anything, so I decided not to call any more until you did." But this anecdote infringes on the subject of etiquette for bachelors, which needs a chapter by itself. Suffice it to say here, that an "entertaining" hostess usually finds it in her way to ask the young men who are civil in the matter of calling—they are few—to some set entertainment before

ASKING BY TELEPHONE

they have paid more than half a dozen visits! In fact it is the one sure way she has of showing that she considers an acquaintance desirable.

Instinct teaches that invitations to elderly persons should be carefully worded and sent; and that certain persons are privileged to be more or less informal in their invitations and answers.

Invitation by telephone is one of these modern innovations to which the conservative have never been accustomed, and which shocks elderly, conventional persons still. The convenience of the telephone for quickness and prompt response appeals, however, to so many persons, that it is hopeless and useless to inveigh against it. And like all improvements, the telephone is abused. For invitations, it should be used spar-

ABOUT TELEPHONING

ingly. If some one's note has been mislaid or forgotten, there is nothing simpler than to telephone to repair the error, and to explain. It is much speedier than sending a note. There are many occasions when a message through the telephone saves the situation, and is perfectly legitimate. There are others when only laziness and want of proper respect are shown. There is no excuse for telephoning an invitation when time is not an object, or when the person invited is not an intimate friend.

CHAPTER V

DINNER

The comfortable, pot-luck, "come-early-and-stay-to-dinner" sort of society is not included in this manual, naturally. Certain communities—perhaps the happiest and most hearty—make their own dinner-table laws, and live up or down to them. They ladle out your brimming soup, or possibly omit that preliminary, and begin by hacking off a generous slice of beef for you. You pass up your plate, or reach over somebody's, shove things about, do anything you like at such boards, and are happy. But these need no rules. The newspaper answers to corre-

LOOK BEFORE LEAPING

spondents, as to how to dispose of your knife and fork when you pass your plate for a second helping, are all such as they require.

It is needless to say to aspirants for social honors, who really wish to "entertain," that dinner-giving is a serious expense, and entails all sorts of obligations upon the embarkers in such an enterprise. For, to begin with, if you have any sort of acquaintance, one dinner is nothing. You have to follow up the first with a second, a third, and, indeed, a whole series, if you wish to be thought worthy of a position in the set you are anxious to adorn. A huge feast to forty persons, even, would not do; you would leave out important personages, or offend the unimportant.

Suppose you start with a dinner of

DINNER OF EIGHT

eight, which is the most comfortable, genial—and expensive—number. You have a moderate-sized dining-room, and a large acquaintance. You are happy in the possession of a reliable cook, and a fair table-waitress. If the latter has a head, and table-sense, she may be able to wait on eight, but certainly not, of course, if you have champagne. That requires an expert's whole time. Let us suppose you do not have champagne, and that your one woman is expected to take entire care of the guests. They are formal, consisting of two august couples, middle-aged; an engaged pair, youthful; besides yourselves. Your *menu* is by no means the greatest care. You write that out, and give it to your cook. It consists of caviare sandwiches and vermouth cocktails; oysters and sherry;

FEWEST DISHES POSSIBLE

lobster cutlets and sauterne; mushrooms on toast, claret for the ladies, Scotch whisky and aërated water of some kind for the men—these two kept up through the dinner; joint with two or three vegetables; salad and game, biscuits and perhaps a compote next; a pudding, hot or cold; fruit, cheese and coffee. Sweets must be on the table, and condiments, olives, etc. Flowers may be omitted (but never are) if you have a handsome dish of fruit, candelabra, and plenty of small things about. But the dishes mentioned are the fewest possible at a formal first dinner.

Think well, therefore, over this list, and then remember that it does not include half. The house must be thoroughly cleaned; your own bedroom must be in perfect order for the wraps,

EXTRA WORK TO BE DONE

and some one must be in attendance there. Ladies, as a rule, unless they come from a long distance, or tear their dresses, seldom go to a dressing-room before dinner; but it must be ready, just the same, and a room for the gentlemen too. Some one must be at the door, for no one can be kept waiting a second. The names need not be announced, of course, at a small dinner. As the hostess attends to the cards and arrangement of places at the table, that need not be reckoned among the expenses; still it is an item of thought, however insignificant. After dinner come liqueurs, carefully prepared with pounded ice; coffee in the drawing-room, cigarettes and lights for the men; and half an hour after dinner, aërated water again, for there is an almost inevitable after-dinner-party

INTENTIONALLY DISCOURAGING

thirst. No one human domestic, it is easy to see, can do all this, and do it well. It is, therefore, necessary either to "have in" a man—there are plenty of them in every large city—or to get a caterer, which is an abomination, and let your cook help in the dining and drawing-rooms. Even then a charwoman is necessary for the tidying up of the whole house for visitors.

These are rather hopeless remarks, and purposely made so. They are intended to discourage the ambitious householder of modest means from attempting entertainments of a formal order. Far better give supper-parties, consisting of Welsh rarebits and beer, and Frankfurt sausages, and scrambled eggs, when you can all "wait" and be jolly, than wear a worried, hunted air for days, overtax your establishment,

HARD AND EXPENSIVE

and lie awake gnashing your teeth and bedewing your pillow through a bitter night.

Dinners are terribly hard to give; they require practice, as well as experience and money. Unless you can put them out of your mind, do not attempt them. They will be mediocre, in spite of your best efforts, and no one will thank you.

Dinners of ten, twelve and fourteen cannot be managed without three, four and six servants, in any sort of order, and are absolutely forbidden to any but the well-to-do. Entertaining, it must be explained, is not banished from the moderate of means; the best dinners and the best fun are to be had in small establishments, where three courses mark the limit and one servant does it all; but this is a matter

ASK THE GUESTS EARLY

apart from formal entertaining, and there are no strict laws of etiquette regarding it.

The etiquette of dinner-giving is oppressive, when you are new to it, and inexorable always. You must ask the people early, a good fortnight in advance, during the season, to allow regrets and then substitutions; you must keep your answers, as no end of mistakes have arisen as to dates, times, and even the fact of acceptance. One married couple went to a dinner, for which the hostess swore they had sent regrets. She had filled their places; and to change the table involved putting on another top altogether! In a smaller and less complete household this would have been impossible. As it was, it was almost a domestic earthquake.

BE READY EARLY

Be ready early. Somebody will make a mistake in the hour and come too soon; and it will be somebody you do not wish to offend. Attend to the smallest detail of dinner before you go to dress, so as not to look haunted by visions of things gone wrong while receiving your guests; and above all, don't leave the drawing-room to attend to anything though, or unless, the heavens fall! Never utter a syllable, nor look a glance of reproof at a guest. Let him break, let him shatter a vase, if he will; the repose of the hostess must cling round you still. Let a guest be late, or early, or disobliging, or rude; you must not show so much as one iota of displeasure with him. See claret staining your best embroidered tablecloth, and smile; regard the wreck of a Salviati goblet and four sherry

STOICISM A PART OF IT

glasses without wincing. Sheath your face in a casing of imperturbable good nature when Norah or the man "had in" spills peas down your bare neck and ruins your gown with trailing soup. Be concerned only if they do it to somebody else. Then look worried to death. In short, and in all seriousness, give your hospitality to your guests ungrudgingly. Your rooms, your society, your cheer are theirs for the time being. Offer them everything with open hand.

When a season is fairly under way, there is hardly a night in the week when there is not a dinner somewhere in your set—at your house or at that of a friend, as we call by courtesy the people we visit. The wardrobe must be ready; not a detail, such as gloves or flowers, left to the last. Suppose

LEAVE NOTHING TO THE LAST

you are yourself giving a dinner of fourteen, which is not a good number for many reasons, although it seems to be a favorite. In the first place, a guest is apt to drop out, leaving the fatal thirteen; and somebody has to be asked to fill a gap at the eleventh hour. Then, as most things come in dozens, there is very likely a shortage of some particular thing. Not that a dinner-giving establishment is ever limited to a dozen plates of one kind, or napkins, or anything of that sort. And yet certain choice glasses, and yes, even plates, come by the simple dozen, and cannot be matched. But suppose you are safe from any worry of that sort, and are ready for your people to come. The dining-room is in perfect order, the lights are turned low, and windows opened to keep the air fresh as long as

PRELIMINARY MOVEMENTS

possible, the servants are ready, and you, without a frown or a ruffle, are waiting in composure for the first arrival. A sudden thought strikes you. "I have a well-regulated household, my *chef* is all that can be asked, my other servants are perfectly trained, prepared for any crisis. I know all the people who are coming so well that no *contretemps* could matter. But if my dinner is faultless, what can there be about the evening to remember it by? It will be like all the others." This rather dispiriting reflection comes occasionally to the mind of the most sanguine hostess. But do not let it disturb you. And above all, do not allow it for worlds to start you on a wild-goose chase after something original. Those who do not like to eat like to talk. Place them carefully as you can,

HUSBAND'S AFFAIR AS WELL

and leave the rest to the providence that watches over dinner-parties.

Your husband must be near you; for although the dinner is the hostess' affair, the invitations are given out in the names of both; and only a very informal dinner permits him to be absent. If the diners come in quick and thick, as they usually do, and one does not lag behind, matters adjust themselves. Everybody stands about talking until dinner is announced, a few minutes later. If there is a late-comer, do not wait over fifteen minutes, on any account. At many dinners, each man is given a small envelope, with his name upon it; and inside this is the name of the lady he is to take in to dinner. He allows his eagle eye to rove till it rests upon her. When the butler announces dinner, which he does

GOING IN TO DINNER

by his appearance, although he may make a murmur of, "Dinner is served, madam," it is easy for the party to "pair off." The host gives his arm to his partner, who is always the person of most importance, by reason of age or distinction of some kind, the others follow as they like, and the hostess, with her companion, brings up the rear. Sometimes it is found necessary or advisable to change this order at table, so that it is best to be sure of your card before taking your place. The dinner-cards are legibly written and placed conspicuously on the folded napkins. The hostess should sit down as soon as possible, for there is an awkwardness always among the younger women about seating themselves first. The place of honor at the table is for men at the right hand of the hostess, and for

PLACING OF PEOPLE

women the corresponding position by the host. Next in order come the positions at the left. But this rule is not very strict when the table seems more easily arranged otherwise.

As to the manner of "setting" the table, there are some few differences of opinion or custom. At the strictest houses there is always a plate in front of each guest; but that rule is not followed rigidly in many careful establishments. Anything very ornate in the way of napkin-arranging, placing of glasses, knives, forks, etc., belongs to cheap hotels, and not to any sort of private establishment.

A napkin squarely folded and lying flat, at each place, a row of forks at its left, oyster fork on the outside, then fork for fish, and a large and small ordinary fork, making four, are usually

LAYING THE TABLE

arranged. At the right of the napkin are knives; a fish-knife at the extreme right, a steel-bladed large knife, and a silver-bladed knife inside, making three. A soup-spoon next the napkin, is all that is required in that line; it is laid squarely across the upper side of the place. Dessert and ice-spoons are brought in later, and so (usually) are salad forks and dessert forks.

Silver knives for cutting meat are obsolete, thank heaven; no one knows why they were ever introduced, except in the interest of dish-washers at hotels. A small steel knife for game, always a silver knife for fish and fruit.

A small knife and fork are placed for anchovy toast, or *caviare*, or whatever is eaten as a relish before oysters, at a formal dinner; but a fork will almost always be found to be sufficient. Indeed

KNIVES FOR FISH

the fingers are usually employed. Soup, it may not be necessary to state, is taken up by the spoon turned away from the eater, and sipped from the side of the implement with as little sound as possible. Eating with a noise is something that society men have been introducing either consciously or unconsciously of late; and if they knew what women thought about it they wouldn't do it, that is all. Fish is taken with a silver knife like the old-time butter-knife, and with a small fork; but as there are many old-fashioned American houses where fish-knives are still considered a superfluity, the "fork and bit of bread" are to be called into requisition in these establishments. Cucumbers are passed and put on the same plate as the fish. They are dressed in the French way—that is, with oil, pep-

ORDER OF COURSES

per, salt and vinegar—and are never ranged in little side-dishes.

An *entrée* follows the fish; and unless it is fillet of beef, or some such unforkable food, is to be eaten with a fork alone

The joint is always separated off the table, at a dinner party, then is put back into the semblance of a whole, and passed. Vegetables go on the same plate, as do jellies, pickles and other condiments. There is no bread-and-butter plate, as at luncheons, because butter is not eaten at dinner.

Game and salad usually follow the joint in the average dinner, but at some houses asparagus, corn and cauliflower—even peas—may be brought on separately, and as a course. It is a far more comfortable way. Corn may be gnawed from the cob, it is generally

EATING FROM THE FINGERS

allowed, but it makes a mess and for that reason, formal dinners are usually without it. It is brought in in a napkin. Asparagus is supposed to be eaten with the fingers; and that makes another rather untidy business.

Game is hot, and salad cold, but the two are often put on one plate.

Cheese is passed with this course in most American houses, but it is not really quite the thing. Cheese should come last on the *menu*. Never cut a salad, nor take cheese in your fingers. Eat it with a knife.

Pudding, hot or cold, (rarely pie) comes next; in very hot weather, only ices. A common plate—that is to say, a so-called tea-plate with a doylie laid upon it—then a glass plate, containing a finger-bowl a quarter full of water—a rose leaf, or a bit of lemon floating

HOW TO REMOVE SEEDS

upon it, is the paraphernalia. Remove the finger-bowl, and eat the ice from the glass plate. That leaves the other plate for fruit. Pudding, pie and ices, by the bye, are not "dessert." Fruit is "dessert."

The seeds of grapes should be removed with a silver knife, or else they should be swallowed. Pears, peaches and oranges should be seeded or stoned in the same manner. Nothing should be spat out of the mouth into the plate, and the fingers should be used as little as possible.

The exclusive use of the fork—which became so ridiculous at one time—extending almost to soup, has gone by. It is in order now to eat ice-cream and berries with a spoon, also puddings and sauces, never peas of course.

Some dinner-givers insist upon hav-

CHANGES IN ARRANGEMENT

ing the caviare or oysters with which dinner begins in place when the guests seat themselves. Others, again, have them brought in immediately afterward. But there is one inexorable rule, and that is, to let the soup wait until all are placed. Lately, some ultra people have changed the mode of putting all the knives, forks and spoons required for a dinner on at once, and have them brought for each course, as required. This makes more work for the servants, and can only be done with very complete service.

Individual taste governs the stationary arrangement of the table far more than it used to do. The inevitable center-piece piled with fruit, the flowers in tall vases, the candelabra on particular spots, have passed away. Now there is opportunity for the dis-

MORE SMALL DISHES

play of more originality. Small dishes are more used, and set about with apparent, though not real, carelessness. The modern dinner-table is a thing of beauty. Electric lights and gas, and any unshaded lamp, should be tabooed from the table. Top lights are horrible, and make ugly shadows on the prettiest faces. Side lights, shaded with colored butterflies, make effective illumination, with candles, also shaded, on the table. Too much light of any kind is heating and fatiguing in the extreme.

Dinner hours in this country have undergone great changes. A book on etiquette, dated a dozen years ago, says: "The dinner-party should never be given earlier than half-past five." Half-past five is now a monstrous hour for dinners, large or small; and eight is the fashionable city time.

LITTLE GENERAL TALK

The hostess should be standing near the door to greet her guests as they arrive; while the host may circulate a little more freely.

At a large formal dinner, it is rather dangerous to pay compliments to the food or table-decorations. It is too personal a topic. It is uncomfortable to talk farther than two from where you sit; and the sprightly general conversation that one sees advocated in society treatises is a little impracticable when there are more than eight at table. There is not much use in attempting to promote general talk at dinner. And in general society of modern make it is hopeless to try to make it anywhere. It is not in vogue. All violent and vehement dialogue should be avoided at dinner, personal topics are in bad taste, and he or she

CARE ABOUT PERSONALITIES

who cannot charm, irrespective of talk, must choose from a small assortment. The opera, the theater, music in general, horses, dogs, games, and other general themes, usually suffice, however, for getting up an argument or interesting a fellow-diner, if the talker is not charming enough in him or herself to make the fact of talking enough. Tact is necessary, and discretion, and without these there is little pleasure in society given or taken.

After the sweets, and the "savory," if there is one, the hostess makes the move. The American custom, copied from the English, is for the ladies to go to the drawing-room, the men escorting them as far as the door of the latter; but a French mode, sometimes followed, is for all to go out together.

LINGERING OF MEN AT TABLE

The rather rude habit of lingering an hour or so in the dining-room is now quite universal; and when the men join the women, it is time to go home. This custom makes the dinner all there is of the evening for the sexes together. Sometimes, however, there is a little music. The vaudeville craze appears to have gone out for private after-dinner entertainment; and these pleasures are enjoyed separately. . There is little to add about dinners. As usual with elaborate offices, most of the trouble comes first; and if everything is carefully arranged to prevent *fiasco*, the thing takes care of itself. Eleven o'clock is the home-going hour for an eight o'clock dinner, or even half-past ten.

CHAPTER VI

LUNCHEONS

These horrors known as big luncheons are mitigating; and, it is to be hoped, will soon be done away with forever. They are far less elaborate and heavy than formerly, the scheme of table decoration is less imposing (and ridiculous), and they are smaller.

Invitations to ladies' luncheons are sent out, as for dinners, a fortnight in advance, when possible, in the rush of a season. The person giving the feast, places sometimes an intimate friend, sometimes a young girl, opposite her; and arranges the rest as congenially as possible. For the *menu*, it is as like

THE OLD-FASHIONED LUNCHEON

dinner as can be, except for the joint, which is now commonly omitted. (Formerly it was always expected.) Bouillon, hot or cold, in cups, preceded by caviare sandwiches and oysters at many luncheons, lobster cutlets, or fish in 'aspic', a heavy *entrée*, such as fillet of beef, a saddle of mutton—never put on the tables of course, but there in slices, just the same, with vegetables; game, with salad; an ice pudding, cheese, coffee; with more sweetmeats than one could eat, and nuts and olives and radishes; and all in the middle of the day. These few simple viands constituted a luncheon, and do still in some houses. For luncheon, white wine and claret only are served; champagne is vulgar. Coffee after luncheon, as after dinner; and green mint.

THE TABLE

To stuff in this manner from half-past one till half-past three used to be the mode. Nowadays the meal is modified, is apt to be earlier, and the women go home promptly, so as to get some afternoon.

The luncheon-table should be, many persons still think, without a table-cloth. A long or large circular centerpiece covers the middle. A tall vase of American beauties, or long-stemmed mixed flowers may stand in the center; but a fine dish of fruit, with four smaller vases of flowers, is more effective. Foxglove and mignonette make a pretty combination, if the room has plenty of color. Nothing is more beautiful than yellow jonquils, carnations and Japanese honeysuckle for a dark room. Green and lilac make the coolest mixture for the warm days of

HOW LONG TO STAY

spring. A dish of purple and white Catawba grapes, in those fat bunches common in the variety, with Sauterne in a pale heliotrope-colored jug, and glasses of the same shade, while olives, persimmons and condiments sounded the gamut of greens, browns and yellows, is a combination seen once on a luncheon-table and long to be remembered. Girls always have a great many sweets on their tables, and spoil the scheme and their digestions with them.

To stay after half-past three, when asked to a formal or indeed any luncheon-party, is to outstay one's welcome. And if the luncheon is at one, as many are nowadays, three is quite late enough.

In many houses nowadays, the children's dinner is at the same hour as luncheon, which makes the whole affair

THE SERVICE

of a different and less formal nature. Guests are asked to such a meal. But this is an affectation of an English custom, and has no place here. It comes from the "servants' hall" dinner, served regularly and in form. Few families in America conduct their households on those solemn lines.

The luncheon is much like the dinner, and is served in precisely the same way. After-dinner coffee and liqueurs in the drawing-room follow it. It is a barbarous bore, but as it gives women the opportunity to entertain married women without their husbands, and saves the necessity of taxing a small household with large mixed dinners, it is a favorite with many, and will stay so.

The huge stand-up luncheon (from twelve to two), which is a crush

AVOID ECCENTRICITY

like a tea, and ends usually in bad tempers and sick headaches for women, is, thank heaven, dying out, as well as the heavy sitting-down feast.

There are other atrocities, such as luncheons at small tables, where the wrong people invariably sit together, and those who long to be at the same table are separated. These luncheons are hard to serve, and not worth the serving, unless adjusted and arranged by social giants, who can make anything they touch "go."

"Pink" luncheon—or indeed any one-color scheme, is *passé*, and was always foolish. There is always a straining after effect at such tables, and an unnaturalness about making all kinds of decorations and food conform to a set idea. The scheme should be there just the same, but merged and hidden.

AT CLUBS

Luncheons at clubs are convenient for one particular set of friends, but a drawback to this form of entertaining is, that persons in the same town who do not belong to the club cannot be asked. This is at times extremely awkward, especially when, as often happens, neither the hostess nor guest knows the rule. A luncheon at a club is a lazy mode of entertainment, since there is no responsibility. If things are bad, all can grumble together, and for summer ease, there is nothing like it.

Men's luncheons at clubs are usually hearty as to food, and formal, and speeches often follow, as the luncheons are usually given to distinguished visitors passing through town.

Luncheon should be an informal meal, and to invest it with pomp and

GROWTH OF SIMPLICITY

circumstance, to make it cumbersome, and to deck it in finery, is inappropriate and vulgar. The luncheon grows simpler, as do our people, every year.

Dressing for luncheons has also arrived at sensible phases. But that comes under another heading.

CHAPTER VII

WEDDINGS

The etiquette of weddings is so formal and so important—for weddings would be so ridiculous if they were not done in order—that usually they are put into the hands of some experienced manager, who gives all the suggestions, and, indeed, does all the arranging. But there are many brides' families who, well as they are determined to perform the conventional duties and preliminaries of the occasion, are not inclined to go in for superfluous luxuries like an outside manager; and to these a few hints will not be amiss.

To begin with, it must be borne in

BRIDE'S SOLE AFFAIR

mind that the wedding belongs entirely to the bride's family. It is pre-eminently their affair. The groom provides a best man, a marriage certificate, a ring, pays the clergyman, and gives the bridesmaids, if there are any, gifts; but all the rest the bride claims. The invitations are hers to send; the wedding-breakfast is hers to provide, the decorations for church and house, the music, the selection of the clergyman—if not his fee; and all the presents are hers.

The marking of plate or other gifts bestowed upon the bride should be with the initials or monogram of the bride, but not with her family initial, after an ignorant fashion practiced a good deal. It is not, of course, Brown family plate that Mary Brown acquires when she marries, but it is Mary Brown's own

PRESENTS BRIDE'S OWN

private property. It is exempt from seizure by the sheriff, and she can leave it in her will to whomsoever she elects; but in the event of her not being married, after all, she, of course, has no moral right to retain the wedding gifts. As for the selection of gifts by friends of the groom, who have never even seen his prospective wife, that is a matter of taste. But to choose something peculiarly masculine is an absurd idea current in some social circles as the proper thing.

Displaying the gifts is a question of taste too. To go through them bores some persons tremendously, and they are not always allowed to skip the process. It delights others, although since the fashion of showing presents without the cards of the givers has come in, there is not so much zest about the per-

SHOWING THE GIFTS

formance for them. As for the propriety of showing the presents, there can be, and are, two opinions. It seems a very innocuous custom, which may or may not be omitted at the discretion or convenience of the parties concerned. Showing the cards is equally harmless too.

But this is a mere accessory, and if, as always should be the case, there is a church wedding that item concerns only the reception, or breakfast part of the affair.

No wedding should be solemnized—no wedding can be properly solemnized anywhere but at church. The office is ecclesiastical; we have few purely civil marriages; and if the ritual of the church is used, it should be used in the place where the office belongs. Dinners, luncheons and coaching-parties

LOVERS TOO EXIGENT

for the bridal group precede the wedding; and the night before a rehearsal is usually held. Some one, not of the family, arranges these festivities; and the bride is a mere passive guest at them.

A man, if he is blessed with good sense, will not haunt the house of his bride-elect during the few days preceding the wedding. Many a girl has been made wretched by a conflict between strong emotions when her lover sends impatient messages, or detains her for hours in *tête-à-tête*, when her mother requires her advice, assistance, and at any rate, her society during that period. Mothers really suffer at such times, at least good mothers do, and a good girl wishes to be with that devoted parent as intimately as possible at that time. Men seldom think

NO VEILED PRIVACY

of this; but there is no reason why they shouldn't.

As to the conduct of the bride before and during the wedding-time, training and taste will dictate that entirely. No one who has watched the various attitudes of brides-elect can help seeing sometimes what makes him wince. On the other hand, it is an exciting, trying and fatiguing ordeal to be a bride-elect; every excuse should be made for a girl who is metallic or emotional. It is a pity the publicity of the wedding was ever instituted. It is barbarous; but nothing is more of a fixture; and so a "big church" wedding stands for all that is peremptory on the programme.

Nowadays, girls go and come as usual before they are married, and there is none of that silly veiled retirement, supposed to be a token of

FEWER LAST DINNERS

modesty on the part of a blushing bride. The groom sometimes gives a dinner the night before he is married; but certain unspeakable orgies—or a certain unspeakable orgy—has altered the fashion, happily, for furious entertainments of a drunken and ribald sort. Sad it is to chronicle that in so-called decent circles such affairs were more than gay; but there have probably been many bachelor-dinners given to celebrate approaching nuptials at which the bride and her maids would have been strangely out of place.

The man who is to be married selects a "best man," upon whom to rely for all the details of the day of the wedding. If the groom is wise, he will not take his most intimate friend if that friend is only endeared by amiable qualities. He will take an executive

SELECTION OF BEST MAN

person, for there are many duties to be done that require neatness and dispatch. The best man should see that the groom's clothes are in order, superintend a valet, if he has one, otherwise descend to the menial service of doing everything, including the packing, himself. He should see that the ring is bought, marked, and in its place in the agitated groom's waistcoat pocket; he should order express, buy railroad tickets, order carriages, and save his friend, who has enough on his mind, all the traveling and other details that can be spared him. The best man should attend the groom all day, get him dressed, at church on time, and stand manfully by until he is actually off on his trip. Then, and not until then, do his duties end.

As for the trousseau, as the bridal

VULGARITY IN TROUSSEAU

outfit is somewhat affectedly called, it depends entirely upon the resources, liberality and desires of the guardian or parent of the girl, or of her own tastes, if she furnishes her own trousseau. There is no doubt as to one fact; and that is, that it is extremely vulgar, as well as impolitic, to lay in extravagant stores of clothes. If a girl's father gives her an enormous sum of money for her outfit, she can put half of it by for replenishment of the wardrobe, when it needs it. The dozens upon dozens of linen petticoats, bodices, and other articles, grow yellow and rot in their desuetude. No one can wear them all. It is better to buy them freshly, as they are needed.

But no manual of etiquette can supply taste. It can only give suggestions, and leave the rest to common-sense.

BUY FOR A YEAR

Buy, then, what you would buy for a journey and a year's wear. If you are married in the spring, get a good tailor-made suit, a dark silk, two light silks, and cambric shirts and white duck skirts "to taste." Don't suddenly, because you have taken a name, trick yourself out in furbelows, laces and precious stones. Study your own style, and the longer you can dress with youthful simplicity, the better you will look. Get a dozen thin and half a dozen thick suits of underclothing; and a winter coat, thick dress, besides the muslins you need for summer. Buy a sensible number of boots, shoes and stockings; and don't lay in reinforcements as if you never expected to see another cent! As for household linen, and those things, most girls are provided with those by their parents,

LISTS FOR CARDS

and they are considered part of the legitimate "kit." But even that contribution may be overdone.

Cards are usually sent to the maximum number of friends and acquaintances. Nobody should be omitted from the "announcement" list at least. The bride and her parents should make the first draft; the groom and his should present theirs, to be added. Married sisters and brothers should submit names that are not likely to be on the other lists, but for which common courtesy demands deference. Suggestions from everybody ought to be in order; and the greatest care should be taken with addresses, in order that there may be as few lacerated sensibilities as possible. There are sure to be some.

As for invitations to the wedding itself, or to the breakfast, or to both,

SOME NOTICE NEEDED

the size of the church, house, or the gayety of the families, dictates these matters. Invitations, at all events, should be sent three weeks before the affair; and *answers should invariably be sent.* It seems utterly preposterous that people, punctilious in every other detail of life, should omit so self-evident a duty. But it stands recorded that they are exceptions who perform this simple function. And they are considered prigs, that is, if they reply to an invitation merely to the church.

The word "breakfast" is purposely employed for reception, because there should be no evening or afternoon wedding. Those who appoint weddings for afternoons or evenings and have them at home must make their own rules. There are none laid down in the code of fashionable etiquette. If

KIND OF ENTERTAINMENT

circumstances require out-of-the-way times and places, other circumstances must be modified to suit the altered conditions. An invitation to a "home" wedding at nine p. m., may as well be shouted through the telephone at four o'clock the same day, as far as fashion is concerned. The affair will not be conducted on fashionable lines, and there are no set rules.

As for the kind of meal to be given as a wedding breakfast there are differences of opinion, as there are different-sized purses. The preference appears to be for a stand-up luncheon with champagne; although a quiet sit-down affair limited to a few friends is far more elegant. But it is impossible to invite a huge number to church and a tiny number to the house, unless the house itself is small; so that if you

WEDDING SPEECHES

have a wedding at all, and are not limited as to room, there seems to be no choice. A real wedding breakfast, as originally conceived, was given for forty to fifty guests, who sat down and were served with system, as at any well-ordered luncheon. There is wide latitude in this, as in most other wedding arrangements.

Speeches at a wedding-breakfast should be few and simple, and even fewer than simple. A display of emotion is ridiculous at such, and all other, times; but a certain amount of feeling has to be displayed. Only those who can control themselves, and speak happily, and to the point, should be allowed to say anything. If there are none in the family and acquaintance, the party is better off without speeches.

It is intended, when very large num-

CALL AFTER WEDDING

bers are asked to wedding receptions, that as they come in installments from the church they should congratulate the married pair, speak for a moment to the rest of the wedding-party, pass on to the dining-room, and after half an hour or so, go quietly out. But most persons have the idea that it is an entertainment to be gone through from beginning to end; and the merest acquaintances stay to see the whole performance, even to the departure of the couple. It is, of course, only for particular guests and the family to do that.

After a wedding, always call on the parents of the bride within a week. This is only common decorum, but the custom is honored largely in the breach. The bride's calling days are named on the wedding-cards, or sent out immediately afterward.

CHAPTER VIII

FUNERALS

No observance, however far from its spirit or obnoxious to its simplicity, mere form may be, can afford to do without it. What we call informality is often disorder; and simplicity, without law, is often only another name for confusion. At funerals, for instance, no matter how quiet or private, absolute system is required; if not, a distressing chaos arises, there is whispering, creaking of shoes, and a general lack of dignity at the service, to say nothing of a stampede afterwards. And before the funeral, etiquette should be observed. It does

CARE OF THE BEREAVED

not "cheer up" a sincere mourner to disregard form; and although anything like sanctimoniousness or hypocrisy is jarring in the extreme, jollity is more so.

Persons in real affliction are physically, as well as mentally, upset. They need quiet, care, and at least passive (some people cannot bear active) sympathy. They need their notes answered, their arrangements made, their wishes consulted, with as few words as possible. They are nervous, chilly, sensitive, unreasonable often, sometimes most unnatural. They need the kindest and most unobtrusive attention, and they also need system. The house must go on, the dinner be ordered, though their hearts are breaking. And on the day of the funeral, if it is a house-funeral, which is not the best etiquette, but is that most com-

FRIENDLY AID NEEDED

monly in vogue in this country, visitors and friends must be taken care of, seats provided and flowers disposed about. An undertaker often takes charge of all this, but there is a great deal of unostentatious service that may—and indeed must—be done by friends.

If the funeral is at church, as it should be, delays should be anticipated and avoided. They do more to bring the dead into disrepute than is supposed. Those interminable waits, for which the clergyman or the undertaker is usually to blame, make funerals worse than they need be made for everybody.

The house of death used to be filled immediately with relatives and friends who flocked there, ostensibly to offer sympathy and assistance, in reality to make an immense amount of work for

'NO MORE SHOW

the family. Some one must be told off to see people; explanations and details as to the last moments have to be given; the condition of the nearest afflicted must be bulletined; and a great deal of harrowing nonsense that could and should be avoided has to be gone through. Somebody had to "think of" everybody to be "sent for," that is to say, a hackney carriage must be dispatched for remotest relatives. That is dispensed with now altogether. Most burials are private, and so announced; and there is no enormous *cortège* at the expense of a sorrowing widow, perhaps, who will be straitened as it is.

The old theatrical system has disappeared, in short, along with the clacking ministrations of a whole neighborhood. "Mourners" are allowed

HOUSE FUNERALS COMMON

to be as normal as they can be; and are not watched every minute to see if they are properly afflicted. The funeral arrangements are made by the intimate friends and the undertaker. The family usually has in the house a trained nurse, if the case has been a long one, who is invaluable in looking after the bereaved, giving them broth and sleeping draughts, attending to every household call.

At a house funeral, the family remains up-stairs, and is not seen. The remains are in the drawing-room, where they are usually seen by those who attend the funeral. The clergyman stands where his voice can be heard—the head of the coffin should be so arranged. At the end of the service, those who are not going to the real burial quietly disperse. Carriages are

AFTER THE FUNERAL

in waiting for the family, and the *cortege* moves.

The nurse, in the meantime, with such servants as remain, has got the house back into its usual appearance; if extra chairs are hired, they are called for promptly, by pre-arrangement; the blinds are drawn up, flowers placed about, and the house given as cheerful and inviting an aspect as possible. A meal should be in waiting; for nothing is so dispiriting to a tired mourner, just through with the worst ordeal of life, than an hour of waiting in a dismal room. If visitors come in soon after, it depends upon the temperament and circumstances whether or not they shall be admitted. Sometimes they do a great deal of good. No hard and fast rules can be observed about such things. Much misery used to be caused

CHURCH FUNERALS BETTER

by making every kind of grief conform to the same measures of retirement and seclusion.

Church funerals are more dignified. The congregation assembles; and when the carriages containing the family, and the hearse arrive, the organ plays softly, and the procession enters, the near relatives close to the coffin and sitting as near it as possible. After the services, it moves out in the same order, and the people in the pews wait until it has passed on. In this way, there is more publicity, but more decorum, and the family is not separated, before the last moment, from its dead.

As for any "invitations" to funerals, the acquaintances should be too high-minded and too sympathetic to expect or to resent anything in the way of omission.

CHAPTER IX

LETTERS

There is no more deadly agent in society—meaning the civilized community—than the letter. It is a precaution of common-sense to be chary of one's written words; but women, in particular, throw common-sense to the winds when they are moved by impulse, and letter-writing of the most disastrous kind is one of the effects of obeying this impulse. The etiquette of letter-writing is, however, that branch of this comprehensive matter with which we are most concerned. It is a temptation to dissert widely on the general topic.

Business men learn to make their let-

BE SIMPLE AND DIRECT

ters terse. They begin with the formula, "B—— B——, Esq., Sir," or "Dear Sir:" and they end "Yours truly," or "Yours sincerely." The French are far more elaborate in their formulæ, but the American custom is the best—simplicity and directness being the best attributes of the business letter.

All letters should be answered as soon as practicable, unless fixed intervals are settled beforehand. A man should invariably answer a lady's letter instantly. There is no excuse for delay in such a case. But a lady should not write to a man if she can avoid it. And girls, above all, should, of course, do so as seldom as they possibly can. All men are not gentlemen, thick and glossy as their veneer may be; and many a man has shown the effusive

ANSWER AT ONCE

epistle of a love-sick maiden, long after she has loathed the object to whom it was penned. Men are careless too; and stray letters are often left about to be read by dishonorable gossips. The sight of a long letter is not an edifying one on a man's desk, or on his table, addressed in a girl's hand.

If a man sends a gift—and more of that later—to a girl, the recipient may with propriety write him a note of thanks. She should always begin it formally, "Dear Mr. Brown," or "My dear Paul," as the case warrants, and never plunge into a sentence as girls do who like to be original. She should sign her name also in a conventional way. A letter without beginning or end may be of the most formal sort; it does not look so. A woman may sign

CARE IN WRITING

merely her initials; a man must never do so.

An unsolicited letter—a request to “correspond”—on the part of a man should be passed over in silence. Men are not as persistent as girls like to think them; and it is quite possible to check them as easily as that, when they are importunate. If they grow impertinent, a few words from a parent or a big brother will settle matters at once, on the surest foundations. Do not write, above all, to say how shocked you are; and that you can “never, never consent to correspond,” etc. This advice, it is needless to state, is for the very young.

The published correspondences of great men and women are valuable historically; but most of them present deplorable pictures of folly, conceit,

PITY OF PUBLICITY

disillusionment and unhappiness. One cannot be sorry they existed; but the writers would be if they were alive, and probably regretted them before they died.

Write few letters to strangers, except of the most formal kind. Put very little personal gossip and no aspersion of motive or deed into any letter; for no one knows in whose hands it may eventually turn up; make your communications as gay, as dashing and as witty as you like, but avoid personalities, unless of a flattering nature.

Answer all your notes immediately after breakfast; and send all answers by return post. Do not keep your private letters. If items to which you may wish to refer and addresses occur, cut them out, or copy them. Do not show a friend's letter to anybody, no matter

DANGER IN KEEPING LETTERS

how trustworthy the friend; and never send it about. Endless troubles have sprung from disregarding these rules. It takes away all the safety and half the pleasure of writing to an intimate friend to feel that the letter may be read aloud to an unsympathetic, or worse, a gossipping, listener.

There is no fixed etiquette, of course, about letters to intimate friends; yet there may safely be much restriction concerning them. A fond mother once showed a son's private letter, in which he spoke proudly of business affairs, to his employer. The letter was so well written and so noble in tone that the mother thought it might advance his interests to do so. It had the opposite effect; for the fond parent forgot, in her zeal, that it divulged some business

MISTAKE OF A MOTHER

secrets, or possibly she did not know that they were secrets. The young man lost his place. Cases are innumerable in which mischief has been wrought by writing too freely to indiscreet persons. And most persons are indiscreet. The art of letter-writing is really not a useful one, and "manuals" about it are mostly superfluous. Write as simple and unflowery a note as you can make it; and tell in a letter just what interests your correspondent, and then what interests yourself. You will be sure your letters are welcome; and if you carefully guard against too much "confidentialness," your mind will be quite at ease.

Always keep the letter you are answering by you, when you are answering it, and then destroy it. To ignore the thirst for information on certain points

DESTROY WHEN ANSWERED

a correspondent has evinced, is to make yourself unpopular. Never omit details, for fear the person knows them. "Aunt Lizzie is just sitting up;" or "Effie's engagement, of which you have of course heard, gives general dissatisfaction," are maddeningly insufficient to the exile dying for particulars. "Consider your correspondent," is a good adage for letter-writers. And make your letters short, under the same rule. He will "wish there was more," and not less; and thus you will also be considering yourself.

As for formulæ for beginning and ending letters, the English etiquette has been rather generally adopted of late. It is exactly opposed to the American form. If you are writing to an Englishman, you can, if you please, adopt the method to which he is accus-

MANNER OF OPENING

tomed; but, if in America, you need not feel obliged to do so. The English custom is to address a comparative stranger as "Dear," and a friend, or better known acquaintance, as "My Dear." Here it is considered more formal to say "My Dear," and "Dear" is thought more colloquial. Each side has its logic. Americans are not very particular nor discerning in such cases, so it has been found rather a good rule by Americans who know a good many English people, to adopt their way. Then there is no misunderstanding. An English woman might consider one too familiar who addressed her on slight acquaintance as "My Dear."

Signing is simple. "Yours sincerely" is safe, while "Sincerely yours" is just a thought more formal. No effusive epithets or circumlocutions

SIGN VERY SIMPLY

are used in formal notes or letters. "I beg to remain, dear madam," would be used by an older man in writing to a younger woman. But set phrases are rather to be avoided. "In the hope that—" "I am yours," is a good way to end a letter.

As for superscriptions, again, English mode has been widely adopted in America of putting "Esq." after a man's name, instead of "Mr." before it. It is always done to an equal in England; while "Mr." is employed in writing to order goods, or to have painting done, or to dispute a bill. There is no fixed law about this; and many Americans dislike to use "esquire" simply because it is an ancient custom revived, without its meaning.

The middle initial is a great point of ridicule in American names abroad.

THE MIDDLE INITIAL

“Isaac P. Newton” and “John L. Sinclair” are roared at. The more elegant habit is to use both initials, or both names—“Isaac Pond Newton,” or “I. P. Newton.” This is a matter of taste, probably, but it certainly looks better to see either both names, or both initials. It is well to know of these shades of difference, however. No item of information, however small, comes amiss.

CHAPTER X

CONVERSATION

To lay down set rules for conversation is almost as absurd as to frame a code for letter-writing. Conversation is an art also greatly overrated by the manual compilers. Silence—dignified and composed—is far more worthy of being taught in the schools.

Unless talk is inspirational, it is better let alone. You cannot learn the steps, as in dancing. You can dance with a heavy heart, or a black one, for that matter; and your footfall may be as light as a fairy's. To converse really well necessitates a good mind and a kindly spirit. This does not

NOT TO EAT MERELY

include chatterboxes, nor the didactic in society.

Etiquette does demand a certain amount of interested conversation, at all social affairs, and at domestic gatherings. People do not meet to eat food merely at a dinner; if they did a five-dollar bill, sent by post, would give them far greater pleasure than an invitation, with its attendant bothers and expenses. They meet to exchange ideas, to be cheerful, to forget their worries and their work, to get new interests, and perhaps to create them. And perfect silence would make none of these intentions known.

A good hostess at a dinner, for instance, can promote talking by her own course of procedure, if she chooses. If the guests know one another well, there is no need of this—they may be

TOO MUCH TALK

trusted to keep their little talks going. On occasion, however, it is important to set the ball rolling, sometimes to keep it in motion by hard labor.

Negative advice about conversation is possibly more useful than positive. The list of subjects to avoid is the hardest to master. First and foremost, do not feel obliged to talk incessantly. Pauses are excellent things in their way; they accentuate the pleasures of talking, and they give time to eat. Do not make your talk purely personal, unless the subject is a public character, or some one under general discussion in a large way. It is not only bad form, it is exceedingly dangerous to criticise a private person freely. And to talk about a woman disparagingly is not more cruel to her than damaging to

DEPEND UPON YOURSELF

oneself. Decent men never do it; women should never do it.

It is not the topic, but the manner of treatment, that interests. Dramatic talkers often carry their neighbors away with them when dilating on the most trivial, every-day matters; while a dull, prosing person finds it difficult to hold his auditor while describing something that ought to thrill. Southern women have the art to perfection of embellishing, and indeed of galvanizing, nothing at all into such prominence, such importance, that it seems breathless. To hear a pretty young Southerner describe how warm she was one day, or how tired another, is an event, when the speaker has the air and the magnetism. Northern women depend more upon their language, and Westerners upon their appearance, to fasci-

PROFESSIONAL TALKERS

nate. But any attempt at sport to amuse or entertain is fatal to the success of a dinner-companion from any point of the compass. Given a good manner, and a good temper, it is not difficult to find subjects of conversation at a dinner. They come of themselves. Violence or vehemence should be discouraged, and great emotion is out of place on such an occasion. If rancor and spite are entirely eliminated, and good temper reigns, the dinner is sure to be a success, conversationally. Cross and satirical persons are sometimes amusing, but these must be very clever—far cleverer than the average diner-out—to succeed. So do not attempt it.

Of all things horrible, the professional talker at a table is the "limit." Just as you are interested in a fine jovial *tête-à-tête*—just growing very pleasing

DO DOT ESSAY TOO MUCH

—a manly voice is heard above the murmuring din, beginning an anecdote or relating a professional experience of his own, which you have seen in newspapers, and rooted out of bound volumes of *Punch* years before. He is at times pathetic; he tries to make people weep, while inwardly they rage, and want to bite him. He is a pest of pests; but he never knows it, because fools and flatterers make him think he is electrifying the company. He is; but with the wrong kind of shock.

Beware of trying to talk to a whole table, no matter what you have to impart. Mrs. Fortescue, who has just succeeded in riveting Mr. Barbecue's soulful attention, will not ask you to anything she is giving this whole winter; Mr. B. will vote you a bore;

TALK AT A TEA

and others will anathematize you each in his own way, and for a special reason.

If you announce a startling piece of fashionable intelligence, Miss J., whom you particularly wished to impress with it, is told in an undertone by her partner at the board, that he had known it all day, but was not such an ass as to repeat it. There is no admiration as a reward for an oration at a dinner, even if it sounds like it at the time.

Conversation at a five o'clock tea or a reception is so disconnected and fragmentary that unless it is very deftly managed it is fatiguing to all concerned, as well as uncomplimentary. To exchange a few words with each of a hundred to two hundred persons in a tremendous crowd and high heat, is a feat rarely accomplished well. When

PAY ATTENTION

"everybody knows everybody else," there is an exchange of jokes and great merriment and lively chatter, but of course it is not conversation.

There is one rule about conversation that may be laid down especially for the new-comers in society. Pay outward attention at least to the person with whom you are talking. There is no worse compliment than the one young girls, and young men too, pay to those others who try to amuse them—that of letting their eyes rove in search of somebody else, or possibly of a mere escape. People who open their houses to you and give you food and drink, and bore themselves to death that you may have a chance to carry on a flirtation, or break one up dramatically, deserve some show of regard. If you take the trouble to discover what has happened

WANT OF TACT

to them lately, so as to address at least two civil remarks on a topic of interest, you will find the investment a paying one. Remember, that your affairs are not of the highest concern, to the exclusion of his own, to anybody on earth, and act accordingly.

"How do you do?" says Mr. Reginald Sharpe, who is ten years older than his hostess, to that urbane lady, as he shakes hands with her at the door. "What a lot of pretty girls you've got here! Isn't that a new one over there? Who is she? May I be presented?" And the middle-aged masher, utterly ignoring a hundred ladies of his own day and generation, devotes his whole time to the pretty and very young set, who in turn laugh at him, and eventually ask the men of their own age to get rid of him for them.

WHAT NOT TO SAY

The really successful society man has a manner of being interested in all, old and young, studies to please each one, and talks about that which is surest to do so. Above all, he does not expatiate upon the beauty and charm of one girl to another; nor does he—a very common failing—say to a *passée* woman-friend, that “after all, there is nothing like youth.” It is astonishing how little men of intelligence understand *finesse* in these matters.

If a man does not descant on the glories of one woman to another, especially an older one, if he avoids raving about music to an unmusical soul, and art to an inartistic, if he does not talk football or golf to a cripple, or books to an idiot, he has learned something about conversation. He cannot be told what to talk about, but only

CONCEAL YOUR EFFORT

what not, and then accident will favor him, if he knows how to avail himself of it. A burning candle-shade may remind him of a (short) story about a fire somewhere; the singing, if there is any, gives him a chance to collect himself, and ask his companion if she knows Calvé, or has heard Nevin's ballads. A woman can usually manage to create talk about nothing if she does not try too hard. The effort entirely defeats its object. Do not be abashed, if you find the subject you have broached—provided you are sure of it, to start with—does not awaken a responsive chord. Go on with it, and make it interesting by putting conviction into it. If that fails, laugh and say, "I see you are hopelessly non-committal," or something of that kind. Lower your voice if it is high. Never

TRY TO TALK SLOWLY

cackle or shriek. When you are out walking, driving, bicycling, or on the golf links, be careful not to make yourself audible, and possibly ridiculous, throughout the surrounding country. Don't prattle all the time, and do try to talk slowly. And when you have mastered these few simple rudiments, showing you principally what not to do on conversational lines, the rest must be got by experience.

CHAPTER XI

PHRASES, AND TITLES OF ADDRESS

But if it is difficult to fix formulas for conversation it is not so hard to give a few suggestions as to small talk, especially in regard to the phrases which should be used (and avoided), nor to make a few remarks on society nomenclature, which is somewhat arbitrary. Etiquette in words changes; and no one wishes to be instantly labeled "outside," by a blunder.

Stilted expressions, like "he has a charming home," "I was out with friends," "we retire early," "it was a spectacle to be witnessed," "where is your good mother?" are to be eschewed

FRENCH WORDS

like poison. The simplest terms are in vogue in this generation; fashionable people—from a reactionary spirit, probably against affectation—going to inelegant extremes and dropping “g’s,” and saying “ain’t.” Any extreme is to be avoided, but the shorter and simpler the expression, the better the form.

Certain French words, anglicized in England, have come to be so here; and although there is no reasonable excuse for their present pronunciation, except fashion, persons who are desirous of appearing “knowing,” will do well to mark these. “Vallay” is never said, but “valet,” with the “t” sounded. “Peekay” for “piquet” (the game) never; it is always pronounced peeket, with the accent on the last syllable. To show how foolish this all is, it is only necessary to point to “croquet,”

"BIN" OR "BEEN"

which has never been anglicized; but these idiosyncrasies are merely mentioned, not insisted upon.

"Bin" is American best usage, but as it is also in use among the illiterate in England, some travelers, as well as all Anglo-maniacs, prefer to say "been." This is an affectation, and is not at all advised. Indeed no foreign trick adds to our reputation; and etiquette only asks that we conform to the best usage of the country we live in. And the best of our conservatives use "bin."

As for slang, even of the allowable order, it requires a person's whole time to keep up with it. Slang is not always vulgar, and some of the modern expressions fit their places so perfectly as to make us feel inexpressive without them. At the same time, they must

SLANG PHRASES

be used charily. To hear "put up a kick," an expression heard from the lips of an elderly lady the other day, was a shocking experience.

Other slang phrases are so common as to have lost the effect of perversion, and to come naturally from every mouth. Such are—"I timed him," "at the last ditch," "I knew you would come to the scratch," and other sporting expressions.

"Barn" for stable, "span" for pair of horses, "team" for carriage, "sorrel" for roan, are old-fashioned terms, and the first three never were correct. "Lawn," "yacht," and other rather pretentious expressions—"residence" for "house," for example, and "guests" for "visitors"—are to be avoided. A man who owns a yacht always speaks of his "boat," or should do so; and

PRETENTIOUS WORDS

asks people to go "sailing," — not "yachting"—with him. "Guest" is not exactly a pretentious word, being short; but it has a stilted sound. A circumlocution is better; "people in the house," or "stopping—or staying—with us" is "smarter." There has been an attempt to substitute the English word "lift" for our clumsy "elevator," and some aspiring American souls say "tram" and "motor," for "street-car" and "trolley." These changes are desirable for brevity; but they have not been adopted and consequently sound strained. It is to be hoped they will be annexed and in time used generally.

"Street-car" is awkward and generic, not specific, while "elevator" is a puffy word, and perfectly absurd, if we stop to consider. The word "store"

MISAPPLIED WORDS

for "shop" is grossly incorrect; and so is "depot" for "station." No one is to be blamed for declining to bend himself to gross misuse of terms; and "depot" has another meaning and cannot properly be applied to a railroad terminus or starting-point, with any degree of correctness. "Dee-po" is a verbal outrage on decency.

"Bureau" is a misapplied term which curiously crept into our domestic vocabulary, but is being gradually expunged from it. It is not etiquette now to say "bureau," except in its proper sense. Applying it to a chest of drawers or a dressing-table is only done in the rural districts now, although it was once a universal habit here. The progressive ignorant have made a compromise, and fallen into another error—that of calling it "dresser," which is the name

DON'T USE STOCK PHRASES

applied to a set of kitchen shelves, with plates and cups thereon. "Dressers" are advertised all over the country now, instead of dressing-tables; and worse still, the new horror, "dressing-case," has come in. As a dressing-case is a traveling convenience well-defined, the new term complicates matters still more.

All stock phrases should be omitted—really from every place—but at all events, from society talk. Never, never, never speak of the "heated term," nor of a "select coterie," nor of the "smart set." And do not use even Shakespearean phrases in your daily talk. Make your own sentences, if you can, of the simplest words, which can hardly be original, but let the grouping be your own. It is better to be inelegant than trite.

MARRIED WOMEN'S NAMES

It is not the best etiquette to call women by their Christian names in mixed assemblies. It is provincial, and creates a familiarity with names which we need never know. Men, however, begin to designate women by them before you know it, and in some flagrant instances, to use them in addressing their owners. It does not matter about men. In some societies they are called conveniently by their surnames, and it does not hurt them. But it takes the bloom off a woman of refinement, be it ever so little, to be known generally as Alice Jones, or Maud Brown, when she is married. This is a distinctively American fault.

On the other hand it is not bad form for an intimate friend, man or woman, to speak of a young girl by her name, without a prefix, especially if she is

WHEN TO USE "MISS"

one of several sisters. To speak of a young woman as "Miss May" or "Miss Daisy" has a servile air, and should be relegated to butlers, no matter if you are compelled to use the "handle" in addressing her personally. There is nothing more countrified than for a man who knows a whole family well, and is received by them, as a friend, to go about speaking of "Miss Jane Brown," or "Miss Anna Pike." And never! never! never, whatever you do, speak of your sister or your fiancée, as Miss Anybody, but just plump her name out plain. If you are engaged to Mary West, and are announcing the fact, don't say you are going to marry "Miss" Mary West, but give your future wife the benefit of your simplicity.

Another decided error is very com-

HUSBAND'S NAME

mon in this country, but not in the very best sets any more. The youngest bride calls her husband, who may be a boy of her own age, perfectly known in the community—"Mr. Young." It is a vulgarism, because it is so pretentious; but the custom is so thoroughly ingrained in this country as to make people oblivious to its impropriety. For any woman to speak of her husband as "Mr." So-and-so to any one but an inferior, is really a species of snub. But as it is not so understood, no one takes offense at it, except foreigners, who are first insulted, and then laugh at the vulgarity of the mistake. A woman should always say "My husband" to acquaintances, and "George" or "William" to her friends. A husband should employ the converse of this rule. In case he wishes to repress

THE DAUGHTER'S NAME

some bumptious youth or to put on great airs with a man disposed to be familiar with his wife's name, he has the privilege of speaking of her as "Mrs." There are a few ways in which we may learn etiquette of England.

In addressing a business firm, one writes "Messrs." before the name of the firm. In speaking of the firm this is not necessary.

Many mothers and fathers—especially mothers—from some mistaken idea of dignity, speak of their daughters as "Miss Mary" and "Miss Susan." Only to servants should this be done; it is a direct insult to a person in equal standing. "My daughter Mary" is a perfectly accessible phrase, if some formality is required.

To be simple in phraseology, and to study the latest words in it, does not

USE THE SURNAME

require much time or trouble. Just as it is in dress, it is easier to be elaborate in speech; and takes some pains. But the habit, once formed, stays by.

There is a weird custom among a certain class in this country, and sometimes among men who have been put up a class without deserving such advancement, of addressing one another, and speaking of one another as "Mr." Croft and "Mr." Wilkins. Men, if they meet on equal terms, should invariably begin at once to utter surnames. Introduced as Mr. Croft, he instantly becomes Croft to the man to whom he is introduced.

There are men who, from some mistaken notion of etiquette or dignity or of what is due an absent friend, speak to a woman of a man as "Mr." Brandt. The writer recollects an instance of a

VULGARITY OF "MR"

conversation between a man and a woman, in which unconscious—or possibly conscious—reproof was conveyed to the latter in this way. “Oh, by the by, Mr. Flagg, won’t you bring your friend, Tompkins, with you to-morrow night? He lives with you now, doesn’t he?” John replied: “I’ll see what Mr. Tompkins’ engagements are, and bring him if I can.” The man evidently thought he had put the lady in her place; but if he had known he would have seen the places reversed. For, even if the lady was a little informal it was her privilege; and Flagg should never tack a handle on a man’s name, except in presenting him. This mistake is one of the most common in parvenu and pretentious communities.

If by any chance you have caused a shrug or the raising of an eyebrow by

AVOID HANDLES

the free use of a man's name, do not apologize or explain. It only puts you in the wrong, when you are really in the right, and retards the cause of etiquette a step — which is to be deplored. Noblemen in England—who do not have to arrogate to themselves false dignity, or even stand stiffly up for their own—are most informal in addressing others of their set, and very chary of handles. We—as Nature's noblemen — might copy them in this one particular, if in no others.

CHAPTER XII

TELEPHONING

Telephoning has assumed such social proportions as to require some rules for its proper conduct. The etiquette of telephoning should really be mastered by many who think nothing of "calling up" or "calling down" people at all sorts of inconvenient hours, and then leaving them to wait, while they themselves are summoned. The telephone is put to improper uses; and some persons — women particularly — almost make blackmail out of their telephoning. For example: Suppose you wish to ask a man or woman at short notice to join a party at dinner, the theater

SPECIES OF "HOLD-UP"

or other entertainment. It may be a person who does not wish to come, who even does not like you. If you wrote a note, you know you would be refused. So you call him up. "Oh, Mr. Brown, what are you going to do to-night?" you ask. Mr. Brown, thus stalked, answers impotently, boiling within: "Why, I have an engagement this evening, a partial one, at least." "Well, I wanted you to go to this or that place with us. Miss White is coming, and wanted me to ask you."

Miss White may be the very person whom our friend had made up his mind to see that evening. He has to show his hand, or give up the pleasure and perhaps make Miss White think him neglectful. In any case, it is unlady-like to pin a man down, and invariably defeats its object. The only possible

RUDENESS AT TELEPHONES

and decent thing is to plump out your invitation at once, and let the recipient accept it or not, as he will. It is unfair and ill-bred to ask him what his plans are before you give any hint of yours.

In the cases spoken of earlier, those involving unnecessary delay on the part of those called, hardly an instance can be given in which an excuse for the offense is valid. Mrs. Appleton is receiving a guest, suppose; a servant asks her if she can speak to Mrs. Battles at the telephone. Excusing herself—as she cannot help doing—Mrs. Appleton hears the usual jovial, “Is this Mrs. Appleton? Well, please wait a minute. Mrs. Battles would like to speak to you. I will call her.”

Mrs. Battles, meanwhile, having airily given the order to “call up” Mrs. Appleton, is engaged in an altercation

ALWAYS GIVE NAMES

with the dressmaker in the third story, or the cook in the kitchen. Found and summoned, she calmly finishes what she has to say, and proceeds deliberately to communicate with Mrs. Appleton, whose telephone is in a hot cupboard, and who is inwardly raging.

It is bad enough for a woman to do this, but men do it all the time, and to women. It seems incredible, but there is plenty of proof. One should always, in calling up, give the caller's name and stay at the telephone. There is no reason why a servant should be sent—because one should invariably be directly behind him or her. Suppose Mrs. Battles herself answers the telephone, and Mrs. Appleton has run gayly two flights away! There are many rudenesses committed by telephones, but this is one of the worst.

TAKING ONE'S TIME

Do not "hold the wire," if you can avoid it, because it takes the time of so many persons, or may do so. The chances are, the telephone official will not call you up, but your "party," as she persists in calling her, will be near the second time you ring. Never be rude to the telephone assistants. It is like shooting from an ambush—at an unseen foe, it is true, but it hurts just as much.

CHAPTER XIII

SMOKING

Smoking—that is to say, the smoking of men—hardly comes under the rules of etiquette, most men will declare. It is second nature, so incessant and inevitable a companion to man that few would bear an argument on the subject of its hygienic properties, or its propriety.

But aside from health and propriety, it must be admitted that there are times and places when and where men should not smoke. The modification of old-fashioned rules in this regard has made the lines faint, it is true, and there is no book on etiquette that does

CHANGE IN CODE

not reprehend as "unbecoming a gentleman" smoking in drawing-rooms, boudoirs, dining-rooms, restaurants, where now men not only are allowed, and invited, to smoke, but where highly respectable women have been known to join them.

Gentlemen in this country do smoke, when at home, in the drawing-room and dining-room; there is no doubt about that; that is, when the women of the family do not object. Most women have a decided objection to bedroom smoking; and it is not a wise practice, on any account, to use up the freshness of bedroom air. But putting aside old-fashioned prejudices, and out-of-date "notions" as many sensible dislikes of women are called—a man should never smoke anywhere, without first assuring himself that it is not

WHEN TO SMOKE

disagreeable to the ladies in the room, and in the house. A gentleman paying an afternoon visit should not smoke unless others begin; and even then it should be some one in authority, and not a younger brother, for instance, or a "cheeky" caller who leads him on. He should never smoke before the ladies have left the dining-room, except in unusual instances; he should not smoke when any one—with a real voice—is singing, for tobacco smoke is death to vocal success and causes great discomfort to singers, whose throats, being highly trained, are proverbially sensitive.

Smoking in the streets is allowed, and cannot be checked, since rules do not reach the masses, unless enforced by police regulations. An American gentleman does not smoke when he is

THE SPITTING HABIT

walking with a lady, or where he is likely to meet a lady. No one but a sensitive woman knows how unpleasant it is in a crowded thoroughfare to walk exactly behind a man whose cigar is not of a high order; and men are sometimes cognizant of this fact, but rarely.

No man on earth should smoke—anywhere on earth—who can not do so without spitting. This is an infallible cast-iron rule; it, being interpreted, means that no one should ever spit. If moments occur when there is necessity for ejecting anything from the mouth the process should be performed, as washing the hands is performed, in private. The spitting habit is the curse of the American people. The spittoon—in a bar-room—is abomination enough; the decorated “cuspidor,”

WOMEN'S SMOKING

as an affected and misguided custom once named the thing in a house, is anathema maranatha. No words are harsh enough with which to condemn it. A man who can not live without spitting should take to the woods, and reside there alone, forever. And then he is not good enough for the beasts that roam there.

The smoking of women, it comes hard to be forced to admit into a regular treatise on customs; but reluctantly as we may admit it, women, and women in America—in certain sets—do smoke. As a question of taste, it admits of no discussion. It is a sad mistake, from beginning to end. As a question of fact, it unfortunately also admits of none.

At first—a few years ago—smoking among women was treated as a sort of

INCREASE OF HABIT

lark or joke among girls who "didn't mean anything." Statistics of an informal collecting then showed that the habit was settling, and on the increase. In certain cities it is now regarded as the regular thing; and almost everywhere the sense of shock has been replaced by one of toleration. The etiquette of smoking among women has not reached the stage when it permits the habit to be publicly indulged. Women are obliged to smoke in corners, when they are at clubs or races. How long this state of things will continue it is impossible to say. At the present rate of progress, women and young girls will be smoking in the streets with men. It is a horror and a crying shame; for the debasing character of the custom will inevitably destroy the delicacy of women.

GROWING LAXITY

As for men's smoking, laxity in regard to that is a necessary result of the smoking of women. Men may not at present smoke in railway cars of the mixed variety, in the theaters, or in church. They smoke in many restaurants now, and will be allowed to do so in more.

Excessive smoking comes under the head of hygiene, and has no place in a social treatise.

CHAPTER XIV

SPORTS, GOLF, BICYCLING, ETC.

Sporting etiquette should not differ from any other etiquette, except in degrees of strictness. In sport, there must be fixed rules for it, no discriminations and no friendships. Men imbibe their sporting tendencies as boys, achieve them, or have them thrust upon them by other boys; women usually go from the cradle to the grave without any sporting sense at all. These must learn the etiquette of games, therefore, as printed in books; and if they cannot help feelings of favoritism, and leniency, or severity for personal reasons, they must keep them to

GOLF A TRYING GAME

themselves, or be barred out from sports.

Golf is a particularly trying game to the nerves and the temper. It is not quick and decisive like tennis; it is slow, long, and figured out on paper. The handicap, an essential feature of golf, is almost impossible to arrange with perfect fairness. Like legislation, the handicap often hits the individual hard, while being the best thing for the masses. And in golf a change of wind, a shower, or the slightest accident—sometimes nothing at all but contrariety—will change the aspect of a good player's game to marked infirmity. In match games, this is especially true; and many nervous players add to their scores, spoiling their games, simply because there are lookers-on.

It may be stated, as a general prin-

NEED OF GOOD TEMPER

ciple, applicable to all, that a good temper is an absolute essential in golf, more than in any other game. You can rage inwardly, and hit a croquet ball all the better for it; at tennis there is not time to be angry; but there is something about the provoking cool little white golf-ball that precludes the faintest trace of spite. A clear eye "on the ball," a steady hand, and an unruffled intellect, are absolutely necessary to the delicate hitting of a minute object with a queer-shaped implement; but besides being essential to the success of the game score, it is more than ever essential to the success of the game socially.

The bicycle at one time so engrossed the attention of fashionable people as to make it appear an important thing to schedule rules for bicycle deportment

RUDENESS IN BICYCLING

in every crisis. The sport has settled down to mere utilitarian getting about nowadays, and so there is no need of anything very special. One suggestion may be made, however; and that is, that there is no occasion for a man to be a boor because he rides a bicycle. A lady can get down from a carriage herself, but a man ordinarily extends a hand to assist her; and there seems to be no particular reason why he should not pay her ordinary civility when she is on a wheel, attended by him.

Invitations to bicycle are informal from the nature of the sport, and the weather that waits upon them. There is nothing rude in postponing a whole trip at the last moment; and none in one of the party falling out, for bicycles give out at the slightest provocation, and one person cannot ride against the

DRESS FOR THE WHEEL

wind, while another is prostrated by heat. It is these vacillating influences that have tended to make the bicycle unpopular, fashionably.

The etiquette of bicycling is to be as civil as you can; encourage and assist the timid, without laughing at them, especially if they are beginners, any more than you can help; to keep your appointments, be at rendezvous, and accommodate your riding to that of the lady you are attending.

Women should dress as quietly as possible on the wheel. A longish, scant skirt, with high boots, an outing hat of rough brown or white straw, and quiet colors throughout, distinguish the well-bred bicycling lady. Sailor hats may be worn, if they keep on. Covert cloth and tweed, in gray, brown, dark blue or black, are in perfect taste.

CHEWING GUM LOATHSOME

Black gets dusty sooner, and shows mud badly, that is all. Fancy hats with feathers or long quills are conspicuous, and to attract attention is the last thing a properly conducted bicyclist wants. No scorching, no tricks and no loud talking on the public highways! Indeed, the ultra-fashionable have declared this form, that exclusive women must ride bicycles only in the country. The women who chew gum, wear yachting caps, bloomers, and bend their backs over handle-bars are quite outside the pale of etiquette.

CHAPTER XV

CHAPERONAGE

It has been said that the laws of genuine etiquette are founded on common-sense; yet there is a great deal of discussion in certain, or uncertain, circles, about the need of a chaperon for young girls in society. Rampant articles are written on the absurdity of setting a watch over young women who cannot be trusted at all if they cannot be trusted in all. Anxious mothers uphold the necessity, girls decry it, and the chaperon herself, oddly enough—for the task cannot be amusing—insists upon the necessity. At the same time, amid argument, plea, diatribe, the

SOME ONE TO DECIDE

chaperon in conventional communities is fixed in her stronghold. No really fashionable party is made up without her; no girl willingly owns that she has been fifty yards from her own door after dark without one.

The uses of the chaperon are manifold. Girls, in their own estimation, are infallible; they "can behave themselves, they should hope, as well without a spy as with one;" they know what to do in "crises" as well as a married woman, possibly younger and less experienced than themselves; they can repel advances, avenge insults, and conduct themselves executively in any emergency; but the mothers of most of them would be glad to see the necessity for violent action averted, and a person of some social standing in place of arbiter.

EMBARRASSMENT AVERTED

If men did not drink, there would be less need of chaperons. Most young men, it is safe to say, who are admitted into the society of young girls, are not without decency of motive. If they are, they will make opportunities for themselves, and those opportunities will not be theater-parties. The country or intimate city party of four going in street-cars to the play is quite a different matter from the dinner of eight or ten dining luxuriously, supping at a restaurant, and driving home in "couples" at an early hour in the morning. Accidents may happen, from which more or less publicity is inseparable. To break down in a cab at two o'clock in the morning is not an unknown incident. It is horribly unpleasant to a whole family connection. It is not necessary to insult a

CHAPERON NO "KILL-JOY"

person of position or to feel that you are insulting yourself when you ask a lady to chaperon your party. If it is large, there is no reason why her husband should not be asked; if small, an intimate friend can easily be found who is quite as gay and as interesting as the girls, and it is not necessary that a party should be mathematically divided into an exact number of flirting pairs, as some crude persons seem to think. A chaperon often averts great embarrassment. One night, at a theater, in a box, were seated two very youthful maidens and two older men. The play developed suddenly into unspeakable situations. The two girls sat crimson, the young men were squirming in their chairs. It seemed the lesser of two evils to sit still and be as inconspicuous as possible. A maturer woman could

MEN SOMETIMES GRATEFUL

quietly have given the signal for the party to leave the box, and the responsibility would have been her own. Innumerable cases might be mentioned in which girls have been thankful for the presence of chaperons. At balls, a little advice, judiciously administered, is sometimes gratefully received; or, if it isn't, it ought to be. Not to sit out more than an hour with a young man, and not to dance more than seven times with another, are hints it is incumbent upon a person in charge to give a thoughtless goose sometimes. And men, who wail bitterly at being "stuck" with girls interminably, are thankful to a chaperon, with whom she may be left.

When girls, emerging from the fold in which they have been kept secure, are driven upon a carping, critical,

CODE OF CHAPERONAGE

uncharitable and gaping world, they ought to know better than to find fault with gratuitous protection. It is their very ignorance that makes them foolhardy. One escapade, one false step, and it is not so easy to begin over again. This may sound solemn, but many and many a girl has blessed her chaperon for saving her from a dramatic disaster.

As for the etiquette of chaperonage, it is extremely simple, like all good manners. If a man invites a theater-party, he secures the chaperon first, and mentions her name in the other invitations. She arranges that she shall be earliest or bring the girls with her to dinner, and the host does the rest. If there are six in the party, which is the usual number for a box, the chaperon and the other ladies of the

NO GIRL DINNERS

party are driven to the theater together, and go home together.

Stress has been laid upon the chaperon of the theater-party because that is the principal exigency. At other times, the absence of a chaperon may be permitted, although it is not desirable.

For a young girl to give a dinner in her own name, and sit in the place of honor while her mother is out or eats in her bedroom, is a barbarous and inexcusable lapse from decency. An older woman should always take the head of the table. This is a matter of custom, rather than of propriety, but it is an inviolable rule. The reason for it is obvious.

Shelter the girls.

CHAPTER XVI

RULES FOR UNMARRIED WOMEN

Women, from the moment they are introduced to society as "*débutantes*," to the last day they live on earth, if they stay in society, are hemmed about with many restrictions. It is really a protection and a safeguard to hem them, and many of them are glad to be so protected and guarded. Those who protest, make their own laws, and strut about independently, if they are strong enough to bear callously the brunt of criticism their course brings, are doubtless justified in it. Most women prefer to be inconspicuous; and as tradition has surrounded them always,

GIRLS CRITICISED

they do not want what the emancipated call "liberty," and would not know what to do with it if they had it. As they are the only ones who would care for the rules of etiquette, it is to them these few hints are addressed.

It is needless to state, in the first place, that a girl does have a hard time of it, from the moment she begins her *débutanteship*. If she is gay, irrepressible, spoiled at home, she is in danger of being criticised as affected and silly; if quiet and reserved, stupid and stiff. Whatever she does or is, or doesn't do, or is not, she is under the searchlight of the mothers of other girls, and of other girls themselves; and instead of having every allowance made for her, as of a lamb strayed from the fold and entirely at the mercy of worldly wolves, she is dealt with as severely

TACT A GREAT FEATURE

as if she were a hardened society matron of twenty seasons.

The only rules for young girls just coming out are: Be natural, that is to say, unaffected; and cultivate tact. The two do not conflict, as they may seem to do. By being natural one does not mean let a bad manner crystallize upon you, nor does it advise hoydenish or romping habits. It means do not try to change your style for every critic, and do not worry over one's finding fault with your effusiveness, and another's with your reticence. Be your best self; and cultivate that best, without regard to the opinions of those whose opinions are not worth having. This may not be fashion always, but it is strict etiquette.

If you are a poor dancer, or if you do not appear at your best in a ball-room,

FIND YOUR SPHERE

give up balls at once. Great suffering has been entailed upon youthful and tender humanity of a girlish order by forcing it to appear "everywhere" in spite of the fact of its unsuccessfulness. There are belles of the dinner-party, belles of the tennis-court, belles of the quiet evening at home, yes, and belles of the kitchen, as well as belles of the dance. Find your own sphere, and adorn that. It is a waste of time, a waste of money, and superfluous agony to make a wall-flower, or a pretended flirt of yourself in places where you are not admired. It is cruel, one knows, to let young girls be neglected or unhappy at a so-called festivity; but young men are notoriously selfish, and even the most painstaking hostess cannot make them do at a dance what gives them no pleasure. They have

DANCING NOT COMPULSORY

their point of view too; and will not come to dances if they are not considered.

Some of the prettiest and most dashing girls look hideous and awkward in ball-gowns. They make fools of themselves by going to balls. At Bar Harbor one summer, the young woman who had the most attention was one who rowed beautifully, swam, played tennis, talked well, and was generally charming out-of-doors; who had not brought a ball-gown with her, and could not be enticed to a dance. That girl knew her forte, and kept to it. She had a scraggy neck, and did not "light up well." But most girls who come out to dance, love dancing, and have their own set of followers. To them the first season is a dream of Paradise. They grow idle, selfish, worldly

SORROWS OF DEBUTANTES

and frivolous. Their mothers cater to their indolence, let them stay in bed until noon, spend hours of thought (!) on dress and on men. If they do not become engaged in their first or second season, they are known as "left-overs," and wreak vengeance on their own unhappy fates by making things as hard as possible for the *débutantes*. Every society knows lots of such girls. It is a glorious career!

"But what would you have us do?" cry the *débutantes* in chorus. "The moment our mothers introduce us invitations come pouring in. There are five things at least for every day. We must stay in bed mornings, or we could not go through them all. We must be nice to men, or we should not have a good time. We must spend hours on our clothes, or they would be in rags.

RUDENESS INTOLERABLE

We must appear selfish and occupied with ourselves, for our coming-out is the principal event of the whole family." It is granted that there are a few months when it does seem necessary to devote one's waking hours to worldliness; but the girl who does that to the exclusion of kindness and politeness to the unworldly, the elderly, the aged and the unhappy, makes a terrible mistake. Fashion may not require that a girl should be studiously, even elaborately, polite to others; etiquette does require it. The gay and preoccupied young thing who looks over the heads of dowdy persons not in her set, but whom she knows perfectly well, commits the greatest breach of etiquette; for etiquette demands universal consideration and politeness of its followers. Rudeness is intolerable; and

AVOIDANCE OF BORES

when accompanied or prompted by unkindness, it becomes brutal.

To avoid, or to rid oneself, of bores, is a difficult task; and old members of society have not learned the art gracefully. Finesse and subtlety are required, and if ever the social taradiddle or polite fib was justified, it is in instances of getting out of an evening of boredom, or a day of pestilence. Etiquette has no rule to force such terrors on undeserving victims. The people who ask you repeatedly to their houses, when refusals and failures to reciprocate must have made clear the unvarnished truth, do not deserve to be handled with gloves. Those who make incessant offers of their pony-carriages and are always giving gratuitous and inappropriate gifts, must expect to be set down—hard. A young girl who is

SHELTER PROVIDED

a victim of persistent and unwanted attentions must be excused for defending herself even roughly.

Girls are shielded from annoyance, from embarrassing situations, from pestering and loathsome devotion, from great responsibility, and from almost all the annoyances that society might otherwise inflict, by the bulwarks that society has reared about her: the chaperon first, the parents, and the customs and habits usually followed. If she does not choose to entrench herself behind these, if she pushes them over, and wishes to embark in her own frail skiff on the waters of life, she is foolhardy, and suicidal, and should be prevented. How much easier it is for a girl, by the by, to refuse an invitation to drive with a man, **by saying, "My father does not allow it,"** than by mak-

CARE IN SELECTING FRIENDS

ing foolish excuses, time by time! Unwelcome visitors are kept out by the common-sense rule that prevents girls from receiving men alone. Girls do not know how grateful they ought to be for these wise provisions of etiquette. No one who has not had a situation to face, brought about by carelessness in these matters, quite appreciates them.

Girls should not adopt men-friends until they know more about them than such statistics as a superficial conversation in a ball-room or at a dinner-party affords. Many men relate their "experiences," and unfold their "ideals" in fun, and to gull young and inexperienced persons, or to hear themselves talk. No girl should be allowed to make a stranger her friend.

Girls must not accept any invitations about whose propriety they are doubt-

COMPROMISING ATTENTIONS

ful. No really nice man will place a girl in an embarrassing position. If he is so young as to be ignorant of the conventionalities himself, the girl's manner will show him at once that he has not set about it in the right way. And if there is permission to be asked, it is he who should ask it, and not the girl. There are men who raise their eyebrows in mixed company to show that they desire a walk and a *tête-à-tête* with one of the ladies about them. If such a man can not signify this wish by an open request, the young woman whom he compliments (!) is very foolish to get up as if casually, and slip out with him. And no attention of a compromising nature, to which these occult signs are the preliminaries, should be accepted. The lesson is learned too late that it is the woman who has to

WAIT TO BE ASKED

get out of the toils as best she can, and always has the brunt to bear.

Etiquette demands that the woman shall wait to be asked to walk, to dance. When this rule is reversed, as it sometimes is, there is invariably regret after it. Men have to be left to take the initiative in such matters. The rule is not as arbitrary as it seems, for men can very easily slide out of disagreeable situations; and no end of inviting would hold them, if they choose not to be held. But even if it does seem hard, it is, in the present state of society, inevitable. To display it is to open the floodgates of criticism, and to feel oneself conspicuous.

As for accepting presents from men —that bugbear of a large constituency —there is sometimes genuine difficulty in deciding what course to pursue. A

PRESENTS OF JEWELS

girl may overrate the value or meaning of a gift, and in refusing it make herself out rather insinuating. It is a well-known rule that any woman may accept flowers from any man, provided she is willing to accept anything from him. A fifty-dollar box of orchids is not more to be rejected than a ten-cent bunch of sweet peas. These things depend a good deal upon the ability of the man to buy them. As to jewels, rings, brooches, chains, they are rather particular gifts, and should be shunned. A man has no right to send a woman a jewel of any value, and thus put her in the embarrassing position of having to send it back. There are many cheap trinkets nowadays, like hat-pins and belt-buckles, but being of a rather intimate sort, it is safe to avoid them. Books are considered proper as gifts;

GIRLS' AND MEN'S FAVORS

but there are few perfectly appropriate books even.

Girls cannot find as many ways of doing favors for men as men for girls, which is truly well. A young man, if he sets about it, can serve a girl in a thousand quiet ways. He can call her carriage, carry parcels, get a cab, lend her an umbrella, ask her to dance, take her to supper, be nice to her mother, and indeed all her family, remember some trivial wish or request.

CHAPTER XVII

MISCELLANEOUS HINTS FOR MEN

Etiquette demands of a man that he shall answer invitations, letters and notes immediately; that he shall be deferential to the old of both sexes, and women of the younger generations. That he shall be dressed neatly and appropriately; a perfectly easy task when he gives a few minutes each month to the subject. That he shall be punctual and polite after he does arrive. That he shall yield place and precedence to women. That he shall never leave the obligation on his own side any longer than he can help. That he shall never borrow money of a

SLIGHT DEMANDS ON MEN

woman, and have as few financial dealings as possible with mere acquaintances of her sex. That he shall bear his physical and mental ills in silence (at least in company), avoid personal attack, and conform in general to the laws of good usage at the period in which he is dwelling. Women have more to study; but they have more time to do it in, and more taste for the task. They have houses to keep in running order, and must never even emit a sigh when the whole clockwork is jangled. They must arrange dinners, luncheons, suppers, breakfasts, and the guests for each of these entertainments; must be guarded in conversation, appropriate in appearance, at the front with a smiling face when suffering most from slight or failure—a sacrifice unasked of men. They must be ready

MAKING ALLOWANCES

to air an accomplishment, praise an enemy, oblige any one who asks a favor. To conform to their regulations they really ought to be perfect saints.

But fortunately, allowance is made for a certain amount of naturalness. Geniuses may, on account of their supposed withdrawal of mind for artistic purposes, be absent and even queer. Some people who are asked out for beauty and attainment are expected to be conspicuous and even selfish. It pays in the long run, for all sorts and conditions of men and women to lay themselves under reasonable restrictions, and to obey, without fear, the time-honored and well-wearing laws of etiquette. It is hoped this little book may help them to do this.

It is the little things that make up existence and prove its pleasures or its

PAYING CAR-FARE

bane. And a great deal of suffering is caused to the morbid and the unskilled in social etiquette by the poignant recollection of a wrong thing done. Among these trifles light as air, is the ever-recurrent and not a little vexing question of the payment of fares in a car or omnibus by an acquaintance, and the adjustment of such matters. Now, there can be only one rule about paying a lady's fare in a public conveyance, and that is, Don't offer to do it, unless you are called upon by the exigency of the moment, or some trouble on her part of making change, or her having left her purse at home, or spent all her money. Men can make things straight with one another by drinks, cigars, tossing up, and the hundred and one ways they have of arranging little differences.

COMMUTATION TICKETS

A woman can not very well do this with a man; and as a rule, the distaste any lady feels at accepting a service from a mere acquaintance is its reason of not being. Some men are forever thrusting forward a coin with the assured "For two" to the conductor, a liberty that is deeply resented by many women. If a lady in a crowded conveyance fumbles for her purse, or looks embarrassed, a gentleman may with propriety ask to be allowed the privilege of paying her fare. And if she offers the trifling sum back to him, he certainly should take it with as little fuss as possible. If it is not worth taking, it is surely not worth refusing.

Concerning the interchange of commutation tickets, the code is the same. On railways, there is such a discrepancy between the price of a single fare and

BUYING PUNCHES

a "punch" off a twenty-five ride ticket, as to make it absurdly extravagant for a person who can avoid paying eighty to ninety cents instead of twenty-five to thirty to insist upon giving out the surplus. The custom has therefore become common of buying punches off tickets from others. It used to be done only among intimate friends; now it is an ordinary courtesy there is no harm in asking of a mere acquaintance. Of course in every case, the punch should be paid for, and the money should be accepted. No matter with how much sang-froid a well-bred woman covers her embarrassment at not being allowed to pay her own fare, on an independent trip, and her reluctance to make a scene by insisting, she is nevertheless embarrassed and sometimes mortified at being placed in a false position.

DON'T BE OFFICIOUS

There is another item which comes under this heading, or is germane to it. Should you, if you see a lady struggling to get on or off her coat, assist her in a public place, if she is a perfect stranger to you? The universal verdict of common-sense will be no to this question. The absolutely helpless are not allowed out alone; and when a woman goes to church, to the matinee, and all such places, she is probably capable of attending to her own wardrobe, even if she is a little slow about it. In England the possessive way we have in this country of hoisting up a stranger's sleeve or giving a jerk to the back, would be received with angry resentment. It has become a custom, but a rather unpleasant one, in this country, and ought to be discouraged.

A woman should never help a well

EFFUSIVENESS IN PUBLIC

man on with his coat, under any circumstances. It is an attention men loathe, and there is no earthly excuse for it.

No doubt much is to be gained by entering into conversation with one's kind in all sorts of places; and if care is taken to speak to safe persons, there is no objection to such innocent amusement, provided it does not take an inquisitive turn. But taken altogether, a good way is to mind your own business when out upon it, and to concern yourself as little with others for whom you care nothing individually, as is compatible with kindness. The everlasting smiles, apologies and thank-you's uttered in public are, it is to be feared, at the expense of private life. One man at least, who devotes himself to small offices to ladies in cars and theaters is known to be a hideous tyrant

GALLANTRY TO STRANGERS

to his wife, if he does not actually beat her, which is quite credible with his record.

Avoid a great show of gallantry, either objective or subjective, while you are out. It means nothing, everybody can take care of him and her self, really. Even in the matter of directing persons to some station or street of which they have lost track, you will probably find they do not take your suggestions, and have either to blunder their own way out or are only satisfied with the directions of officials. There are plenty of those, and they are there for such purposes. Which being interpreted, does not mean be churlish or disobliging, but do not lay too great stress on a casual kindness, and do not be worried if it is not accepted.

Even in these modern days, ladies do

CRUDE COMPLIMENTS

not, as a rule, show their preferences for men. They will call down ridicule on themselves, if they do, unless they are engaged or married. It is not etiquette to relate small domestic incidents. A recollection of the unfair advantage a husband, wife, father, mother, brother or sister takes of those whom he sees in strictest intimacy, and under every possible strain, should keep him or her from telling anything to the discredit of the person involved; and most persons are modest enough not to like to have creditable things related of them, which occurred privately.

It is not etiquette, nor good manners, but it is nevertheless a great American failing to pay crude personal compliments, especially to rich and favored individuals. It is both vulgar and snobbish; but the frequency of the

WOMEN'S COMPLIMENTS

thing can be attested with the slightest attention bestowed on the next group observable. Women even pay compliments to men, and women to women. To hear one lady call another charming is rather disgusting, and usually safe to consider insincere.

CHAPTER XVIII

OBLIGATIONS OF BACHELORS

The married man has more or less ease in society-matters, his etiquette is all done for him. Nowadays he pays his own visits if he chooses, and can be asked out to dinner without his wife; or stay at home quietly while she goes, without exciting comment; but he can shirk the visiting responsibility at will, and his wife is always glad to manage his social duties for him. The bachelor in society is a less fortunate person; and although he has a perfect stock-in-trade of dodges, subterfuges and exits whereby to make his escape at need—there are things he must do, if he wishes to keep up his end. These

THINGS MADE EASY

things are simple in style and few in numbers compared to the requirements the young society-maiden is obliged to fulfil or die socially; but these few must be done. He may live anywhere he likes; (fancy a girl hailing from an unfashionable street, and expecting to be noticed!) he may put a club address on his card or head his notes with it, even if he goes there only for that purpose. He may be as poor as death, and say so. If he has a good manner, clothes enough to appear appropriately covered, is manly in looks and courtly in mien; he can get on well enough to be asked everywhere when once started. The bachelor who wishes to establish himself, however, must be scrupulously neat, very obliging, and know how to discriminate between families and persons. A very rich and distinguished

CIVILITY TO ALL

bachelor, and an Englishman, can be rude, disobliging and slouchily appareled in most cities, if he chooses to make such an ass of himself, it is sad to say; but an American bachelor, with his own prestige to make, has to be careful about his looks and his manners. If he sings or has any other "parlor-tricks," his success is foregone; but dull young men with no prospects have made great hits, with care and watchfulness.

The young man who flatters himself he can enter fashionable or desirable portals, and ask for the girls alone of a household, have a good time with them, and make an impression, is much mistaken. He must be not only civil to the older members of the family, but attentive to the mother and empressé with the maiden aunt; he would do well

ATTENTIONS AND GIFTS

to send some flowers occasionally. If he can do some small entertaining on his own account he helps along his cause considerably; but this is not necessary. To come on time when asked to dinner, to look pleasant, eager, and to be polite, these are the only everyday requirements. A bachelor's attentions must not be too pressing. Most young girls and most parents are willing to allow a good deal of marked devotion, even if they know it has to be checked later; so the young fellow will do well to have himself in hand; and if there is danger for him, to look out for it.

Sending flowers is harmless, and means nothing unless repeated to excess, when it becomes significant. If a lady at whose house a man has been entertained, falls ill, there is no suggestiveness in his going often to

IN AN OPERA BOX

inquire, or to bear flowers, and it is only the proper thing to do. There are other attentions equally harmless.

There is a trick of bachelors, which has grown into a custom—and a very bad one it is, too—and that is, a way he has of dismissing all responsibility at the theater or opera, when he is entertained in a box. A lady, we will say, asks two other ladies and three men, to occupy the box. The moment the curtain goes down at the end of the first act, the men scamper. This custom arose from the fact that their disappearing left the ladies of their party free to entertain other men; but it has passed that stage long ago. A man should remember that a woman is practically a prisoner at such a place, and that each one should be allowed the privilege of choosing whether she shall

AT THE THEATER

stay where she is, or walk about. A lady making up a party last winter said she no longer asked desirable men to her box-parties, but men she didn't like. "Then," she said, "I stand some chance of seeing the men I do like between the acts, when I can talk to them; and the others I get rid of."

As for leaving ladies at the theater between the acts, it is not done to any extent now; and for a man to leave a lady with whom he is sitting alone, is considered barbaric. Nowadays there is a chance for a lady to get a breath of air in the foyer—which is a great improvement on the torture she used to undergo, cramped in a seat for hours.

As for the duty of a man asked to dine and "go on" to a ball afterward, there seems to be deep ignorance on the part of many a young man so

AT A BALL

placed. How can any doubt exist on such a point? Yet every hostess must recall instances when she has dined young men handsomely, conveyed them at her own expense to a dance, and never seen them again through the night. If she is elderly, or even past her first youth, no such thought occurs to the escort as to ask her to dance; though why, it is difficult to see. She usually has sense enough to secure some man or men of her own set who like to be with her; but even these are not to be depended upon, when younger and prettier faces appear. Instances have been known of positive neglect; but the rule in such cases should be for a hostess to summon the men of her party, if they forget their manners, and ask them to sit with her, or escort her where she likes to go. If the youths

SHOW GRATITUDE

are indelicate enough to forget their manners, it cannot hurt their feelings to be reminded of them, and a little self-sacrifice is healthy for them.

Bachelors labor under the impression often that their presence confers a favor on the recipients of their visits and escorts. Such is perhaps often the case, although they ought not to think so. Men are asked to make a showing, to pair off with the girls, to make the women seem popular and attractive; but even in these cases they derive something of benefit from the outing—an evening's amusement at the play, a talk with agreeable persons—not always in their own party—and various other boons. They should certainly show some species of gratitude whether they like it or not. And they ought to feel it.

RETURNING FAVORS

There is a sliding scale apparently of obligation on the part of bachelors as to entertaining those who have entertained them. Society is so pleasantly tempered to single men just now as to admit of their receiving invitations just the same whether they have done their duty or not. Some men are favored all the more for their delinquencies. But as in all moral questions so in this apparently frivolous one: if a man wishes to preserve his self-respect, he must do what lies in his power to reciprocate such favors as have been bestowed upon him without particular desert on his part. The things that he can do are these: he can entertain at supper at very little expense. In winter small sausages, eggs, welsh rarebit, and other chafing dish mixtures are more welcome than many expensive

SIMPLE ENTERTAINMENTS

dishes; beer is quite admissible with this kind of supper.

This style of returning favors can be managed whether the bachelor has a house of his own or not. If, however, the young man has no presentable suite of rooms, he can take the party he desires to honor to a good restaurant of a Bohemian flavor, after the theater, or after nothing at all. In summer, the various roof-gardens and open-air vaude-
villes offer opportunities; and at seaside places sailing—for almost any bachelor can command a friend's boat, or obtain permission to bring a few friends, or hire a boat, for purposes of entertaining. Luncheon does not cost much on such occasions. Then there are clubs—country clubs, principally—at which a man can always entertain his women friends, with golf, polo, and

THEATER-PARTIES

other sports thrown in, to watch, or to join.

Theater-parties are, after all, the stand-bys for winter entertaining by young men. They are not very cheap, it is true; but if two unite, the expense is not excessive. It is not necessary to have carriages, if you live in a small town; walking is better form, if the distance is short, and the ladies wear hats. But in a large city, a carriage or two is a necessity. The man giving the party should call first for the chaperon; if he is frugally inclined, he can let the carriage start at her house, and meet it there. Suppose there are two other ladies, six being the usual number, when it is not smaller. The other men meet the carriage at the theater door. After the theater, the men again get themselves somehow—any-

THE NECESSARY EXPENSE

how—to the supper-place, as long as there is one escort for the ladies. Supper should be ordered beforehand, if possible. Twenty dollars will, if arrangements are made in advance, carry this sort of party through successfully. This allows nine for the seats, three for the carriage, and eight for the supper. Champagne adds another ten dollars, at least.

At such parties it is a common thing for the chaperon to entertain the whole party, at dinner first; but that is not the kind of party of which we are really speaking. The case of a bachelor returning favors would not include such assistance from a woman, who would probably then send the whole party in carriages of her own hiring. And that would only make another obligation for the bachelor.

CHEAPER METHODS

A young man might have to look at a twenty-dollar bill a good many times before he could spend it in that way, perhaps you say. That method of entertaining only disposes of five of his acquaintance, and he has hundreds. But the special entertainment of bachelors is only done to special friends; and three such parties in a year would advance him a long way in favor.

There are cheaper methods; there is tea at bachelor apartments, excursions to see pictures or museums, or processes in factories. The will is taken for the deed when the young man shows himself zealous to bear at least a fraction of his part of the social burden. And opportunities always come to him who is looking for them.

CHAPTER XIX

DRESS

Etiquette in dress is one of the most important branches of the whole subject; but fortunately for the compiler of a manual, instinct, example and experience have accomplished so much in the way of making Americans dress properly, that there are only a few hints needed. These are as to appropriateness, principally. For it may be laid down as a safe general precept that the beauty of dress is in its suitability to an occasion. The most exquisite ball-gown Worth or Doucet or Paquin ever turned out, would look worse than a coarse print at breakfast;

APPROPRIATENESS

—while a lovely Gainsborough hat, with perfect feathers and irreproachable set, at dinner would be in worse form than a coiffure of short curls. And that is saying a great deal.

In appropriateness our people have something to learn, as has the whole world for that matter. Pearl necklaces and jewels in the mornings are monstrous, no matter what the fashion of the moment may decree; and there will come a time when everybody will look upon them with horror, as every one indeed used to do.

The day is past when latitude or great variety in dress is considered original. Clothes, if they are startling at all, must be startling in degree to be borne. A train cannot be worn where only a short skirt is in order; nor can an abbreviated drapery go

MORNING WEAR

where full dress is required. A garden-party, for instance, or out-of-door tea at a private house demands a muslin, silk, at any rate, an elaborate toilet, while at a golf club, such dress is absurd, except for the elderly or non-players. In winter, frills and furbelows, if they are worn at all, are worn at large teas; and the plain tailor-made suit has gone out for such purposes. It is difficult to follow the vagaries of fashion in these regards; and etiquette unfortunately decrees that we shall follow the prevailing fashion.

For morning wear, no dress can be too simple. Luncheons are growing more and more informal, as has been stated, and simpler and plainer things are worn. When distances are great, however, and one dresses for calls in the part of the town where the luncheon is,

MEN AT LUNCHEON

afterward, more elaborateness in dress is allowed. A man, who is not a common spectacle at midday meals in mixed company, nowadays dresses in morning costume; which consists of a business suit, fancy waistcoat and tan shoes, if he likes. Also, a derby or soft hat, which, it is unnecessary to state, is not worn at the table. It seems ridiculous, but it is necessary to remind some would-be fashionables, that gentlemen do not appear in high hats and tan shoes at the same time, that is, if they wish to get up a reputation for dressing well.

Silk dresses, which for some years have been tabooed, for daily and out-of-door wear, have come in again. They are now worn a great deal, except in the mornings, when they are not permitted. Cotton and woolen are then

FOLLOWING THE FASHION

the wear. Long sleeves are worn with low dresses, but not at very large dinners. Jewels are always in taste at night; and in fact there is no difference between the ball and "big dinner" costume nowadays.

It is useless, however, as may be seen in a moment, to detail the particular kind of clothes worn at a particular period; for fashion, not etiquette, prescribes the cut and quality of each year's costumes. Etiquette's part is to follow in this case, not lead. The point is, do not wear long sleeves where only short sleeves are proper; nor short skirts where only long ones suit the occasion. Fashion-books and dress-makers, and even newspapers will give you detailed information as to many details that etiquette does not even take the trouble to learn. A manual

SUMMER EVENINGS

can only teach you to be sure you are right, before you follow.

Never wear a hat or bonnet after seven o'clock in the evening, unless you are going somewhere in a street-car or omnibus. At the theaters now hats are removed, and there is no need of spoiling one's hair by putting them on. So that the rule is a safe one for women, of course. As for men, whether or not it is an ephemeral custom can not be said; but a certain latitude regarding evening dress for them has been growing of late and is not confined to summer. From June to October morning-dress is not only permitted, but suggested, to men, as being far more appropriate than the regulation evening costume. There are good reasons for this: one is that outings, bicycle trips, visits to vaudeville, long

DINNER COSTUME

rides in street-cars out into the country, and various other out-of-door informalities are apt to be proposed; and another that as evening dress is never seen in the streets of a city without an over-coat the discomfort in hot weather is great. But, as has been said, there is a tendency to be lax about evening dress for men at theaters, and indeed anywhere except at formal dinners, where of course there is no question of its imperativeness. In general, however, except during the summer, the only safe rule for a man is to put on his evening clothes every evening. And as he must change for dinner anyway, he may as well do it properly.

Low dresses have never been worn at the theater in this country, nor much, except in boxes, at the opera. In England it used to be the exception to

IN THE THEATER

see a high gown in the "pit," but now that dining at public places, which used to be thought intolerable for women—has come in—there is less of the "full-dress" compulsory business on ordinary occasions. But this is American etiquette.

A safe general rule is this: For a dinner-party—that is to say, a dinner followed by no theater—excursion or outing of any kind, a low-cut gown for women, and the costume known as evening-dress for men, are necessary. Only extraordinary circumstances warrant a man from appearing in "the season" otherwise than properly dressed; while a woman, if she has a cold, may occasionally ask to be allowed to appear in a high-necked frock. But the high-necked frock is always of lace or muslin and of a holiday kind; whereas a man,

OVER-DRESSING

if he came in day-clothes, would be of a dark, stuffy appearance. For day, waistcoats are made high and show no shirt.

Long sleeves are sometimes seen with low evening dresses, but fashion, and not etiquette, settles that point. Jewels may always be worn at a dinner.

As for "over-dressing" the line is not easy to draw, for the reason that customs vary so in different places. In winter, a stuff dress, or as we call it, a "cloth suit," with a fancy bodice, is the usual thing; but rich and elderly women often wear whole costumes of silk, elaborately trimmed. Lace is worn with these toilets far more than it used to be; but these are matters for the dressmaker to decide. Keep a "lunch-eon-dress" on hand, and ready to wear, two dinner-dresses, a costume for

STREET COSTUMES

the theater, and you will be safe. And never count on an occasion being so very informal, at the height of the season in a city. There will always be fashionable women who are "going on" to something else; and you want always to be ready for calling, whether you have planned for it or not.

Most women prefer to be dressed in dark clothes for shopping and crowds, and sometimes carry this careful doctrine to the extreme of making themselves uncomfortable. In these days of extremely light clothes, and washable toilets for summer, it is more cleanly and more economical to dress in cotton gowns—or shirts and dark skirts, and as so many do it, it no longer makes one conspicuous.

Low shoes used to be considered too informal for street wear, but are now

LOUDNESS AND VULGARITY

universally worn. This shows, as well as another instance, the changes fashion wreaks in etiquette.

For visiting, "spending Sundays," or even for a night-stay more clothes are required than formerly. One suit, either masculine or feminine, can not be made to do, especially with our changes of weather; so a large portmanteau or even a small trunk, is quite permissible, whereas in old days it used to be thought portentous of too long a stay.

Loud colors are very risky; and should never be attempted except in the country; and then in an intimate crowd only, and when one has several other more quiet garbs to follow, in case of necessity. Extremes should be avoided, at any rate, as vulgar and glaring.

CHAPTER XX

SERVANTS

Much has been written and said about the duties of mistresses to servants; or as the essayist and preacher usually put it, of ladies to their "help"; but the best of all teaching is to regard the whole connection as of a purely business nature until time makes the relation more personal, or admirable service stamps it as needing other than common consideration. In every other department of life but that of domestic service, business is business; in the hiring, housing, and treatment of servants, it is a mixture of indulgence, patronage, exaction, peevishness and fear. Now,

DEFINITE BARGAIN

although it is conceded that house-servants are recruited from the ignorant and superstitious classes, it is also claimed that, while they do their work properly, they are not legitimately under social surveillance, unless there is reason to think they are leading foolish lives, throwing away their money, or abusing your generosity. Then the best way to do is to state the terms of your contract simply; and tell them to decide whether or not they intend to abide by them. The amount of time that is spent in suspecting, watching and worrying would be saved by this straightforward means. If the law of the house requires that your domestics shall be in-doors by ten o'clock, make them, by some sure means, register their coming. If you have no rule, there is no reason to think

SERVANTS' DUTIES

they should not suppose themselves privileged to prolong their stay at some friend's house, just as you do your own, without fear of reproof. There is reason in all things.

But much as mistresses need rules of etiquette, servants need them more. In attendance at the door, for example, no maid with a sour visage should be for a moment allowed to wreak her mood on a visitor. She should open the door at least half-way, be ready with a tray to receive a card, and be perfectly certain before she waits, who is in, who not at home, and what excuse to make for each one asked for. She should learn the names of the families' friends as soon as possible, and remember messages left for each and every one of them. She should be able to telephone intelligently and respectfully,

ADDRESSING EMPLOYERS

to run on errands, and make herself universally useful. She should have her mending, or her sewing for herself—if such is allowed—in a convenient place, so that no moment should be idle. She should be cheerful, obliging and patient. If this sounds exigent, remember that it is no more than every child in the world is supposed to be taught to be, and is stock-in-trade for a housemaid.

No servant should ever address the heads of the house by their names: that is to say, she should not call out: "Mrs. Brown, may I speak to you a moment?" or: "Mr. Brown, a man wants to speak to you down-stairs." It is disrespectful, and should never be tolerated. If it is necessary to summon Mr. or Mrs. Brown, the maid should stand first, in such a way as to attract

RECEIVING ORDERS

attention, and be invited to explain her errand. Then she should say: "May I speak to you, madam, or ma'am?" or, "A man is down-stairs wishing to see you, sir." This is the only manner permissible. In speaking to outsiders, the name of course often has to be used, since "master" and "mistress" are abhorred terms in this country, and never employed by domestics. If a maid calls "Mrs. Brown," she should be reproved at the earliest possible opportunity; if she replies "All right" in response to an order she should also be severely corrected. "Very well" is the proper reply. And she should invariably answer, to make sure that she has heard.

The same rule of course applies to man-servants; but as they are mostly English in this country, they sel-

DRESS OF SERVANTS

dom have to be instructed on these points.

It seems hardly necessary to state that a servant should not be in negligée when on duty. In many excellent houses, on off days—that is, when the lady is not receiving—the butler attends the door in his shirt-sleeves. That this is most disagreeable to ladies who occasionally are obliged to call on other than reception-days, and who may be intimate friends of the mistress, is evident. It is an affront to all concerned. It ought to be an easy thing for a man at his work to have a coat ready to slip on before he appears at the front door.

The proper mingling of interest with respect is studied to most advantage in the really good English servant, man or woman. The subdued sympathy with which they receive an expression

SYSTEM

of personal discomfort or annoyance or loss on the part of their employers is a fine art. Few American domestics have acquired it, or appeared to care to do so. It is a great feature of daily comfort, and it would be policy for our surly or familiar retainers to try to cultivate the manner. As for feeling it, that is another thing; but all things being equal, feeling or not feeling, the expression is a great deal.

An honest, willing and capable servant should not be a rarity in this country. Wages are high, service, as a rule, is light, and hours are far easier than in most countries.

System in a servant is a wonderful acquisition. The woman "with a head," as we say, can serve a tableful at luncheon, while a confused, no matter how earnest, handmaid is struggling

CARE OF LIQUORS

and falling over herself, to help three. Some waitresses leave the ice to the last minute, and chop with a great crashing in the pantry, while the soup is on. Others again chop it long before dinner is ready; and on a very hot night, find most of it melted before dinner begins. Some pound too much, and some too little. But your good level-headed woman has just enough ready at just the right minute, never forgets what condiment is needed with this or that dish, and is ready with each, exactly on time. Your confused waitress is an abject sufferer, and entails misery on everybody else.

Liquor is a great temptation to many persons, not in the menial class; and to the latter it is rather a cruel ordeal to have the charge without occasionally tasting. Servants should

HOUSEMAID'S COSTUME

insist upon reporting the use of each bottle, as it goes, and have a list kept by somebody, for their own protection.

In the morning, the housemaid may wear a light calico, simply made, as it is then she has really hard work, and a cloth dress would be absurd. In summer, she may wear this up to late afternoon; and in extreme weather, it is customary to allow her to wear a cotton dress through the day and evening. But she should always change it before visiting-time in the afternoon. In the season, of course, she wears a neat stuff gown. An apron and cap—but invariably the former—should be worn. Light shoes in the house, always, and clean, smooth hair. Frizzes should not be tolerated in servants who are in evidence. Cooks of course are amenable to none of these

FEEING SERVANTS

rules, and to few others; but they are out of sight, and not as subject to perquisites as the others.

As this is not a housekeeper's manual, it is impossible to go into the question of the division of labor where there are many servants. The subject of fees belongs, however, to etiquette, and may be briefly touched.

It is a great pity that the system of feeing servants who are, it is safe to conclude, amply paid, fed, clothed and lodged, has crept in here. It has done so, to some extent, but only in country-houses. After a visit over Sunday, a dollar is quite enough to bestow upon any servant, unless he or she has done some extra work for you. The idiots who give five dollars, and fee every separate attendant, are real enemies to the moderately well-to-do, just as is the

SPEAKING TO SERVANTS

man who always overpays his cab-driver. Attempts have been made to check the growth of the feeing custom, but it is quite true that fees are, in some houses, frankly expected from guests.

It is etiquette, as well as manners, to address the servants in a house one knows, on entering. Well-bred persons have the instinct to do it; others would do well to cultivate the habit, if they wish to achieve the effect of breeding. An English nurse who came to this country, said: "There is one difference between English and American ladies. No English lady would ask to see the baby I am tending without saying, 'Good-morning, nurse'; but an American lady never notices me at all."

As servants are never trained for

FALSE RECOMMENDATIONS

their work in this country; and as each household makes its own laws, and also abortive and spasmodic attempts to enforce them—it is hard to prescribe an etiquette for the care and treatment of domestics, or for their own behavior, which will be cohesive or present practical points for use.

Gentlemen and ladies have absolutely no conscience about servants. They overpay good ones, and scatter bad ones among their friends, to be rid of them. Frank and truthful about ordinary matters of everyday traits, the otherwise frank and truthful do unkind and sometimes disastrous things; but nothing can reach them; and they are amenable to nobody. "Poor thing!" they say of a drunken cook, "I have nothing against her," and "she might get on very well anywhere else."

INTELLIGENCE OFFICES

This is what is known as "benevolence" in the domestic service branch of existence, but no other.

So how can one expect honesty and candor among servants themselves, or at "intelligence" offices, these hives of treachery and blackmail. The very misnomer is in itself an immoral lesson. A woman is highly "recommended"—falsely by her last mistress; why should the office go back of that?

If servants would learn their work thoroughly, and do it well, they would insure for themselves a living and kind care all their lives. The stories about cruelty to domestics are certainly not true in this domestic-fearing land, where they rule with rods of iron and by reigns of terror.

In the so-called "best" families in America—that is to say, in families of

CODE FOR THE RICH

wealth and social ambition, the English code is adhered to as far as is compatible with the interference of outsiders. But without investigating that code thoroughly or making rules for the very rich—who can always take care of themselves—it is better to look over the great field of people anxious to live well and in order according to their means; and to give them some suggestions as to the best method of regulating their households as to the proper division of domestic service.

Most families of average Americans—with the head of the house earning say \$3,000 to \$3,500 a year—"keep" two servants. These two servants are women, and are called respectively "cook and second girl"—the latter a horrible and undignified appellation

DAYS OUT

which is responsible really for much of the slackness attendant upon this thus belittled position. "Housemaid" is the proper name. The cook cooks, as a rule; but in thousands of families, she washes and irons, which exempts her from her normal duties two days in the week; she has every other Thursday afternoon and evening "out"; and every other Sunday afternoon and evening. This ridiculous system interferes with the proper cooking, as may be seen, to the extent of six meals in every week, and ten meals every other week—got by the housemaid. That this is manifestly unfair need not be insisted upon—mistreating the family and the second maid with great injustice. But this inexorable law obtains in so many communities as to make it almost national.

DIVIDING LABOR

When an establishment boasts two maids, and the washing has to be done by them, it should be divided between the two.* There should be no hard and fast, adamantine laws as to which should do this, or do that, but the washing, ironing and cooking ought to be amicably divided, so that there need be no friction and no hiatus at the table or in the return of the wardrobe and family linen. As for the Thursday and Sunday holidays, they are so inconvenient as to deserve, nay, command, abolition. Servants should take holidays when convenient, and mistresses should manage matters so that they shall be convenient, but to go without a cook two nights and a waitress two, is absurd to ask of the most considerate of householders.

Three servants usually include a

FOR LARGER ESTABLISHMENTS

laundress; four a butler, in this country
a man-servant who can be called upon
for many things.

CHAPTER XXI

TREATMENT OF REPORTERS

A breach of etiquette which has not been included in treatises, so far as known—for the reason, probably, that it is of recent or not yet recognized usage—is what may be called, for want of a better name, newspaper etiquette. By this phrase is meant the exchange of amenities between reporters and their victims.

The “interview,” try to disguise the fact as one may, is an acknowledged evil. Few persons of taste like it; but as there are many who desire to be represented as holders of certain important opinions, and many more

RULES FOR SEEING REPORTERS

who are willing to sacrifice their privacy to something, call it public good; as there are thousands with tastes perverted or vitiated who wish to appear in print on any pretext—the few who hate notoriety, and consider publicity on any pretext poisonous, must submit to their fate. Fate has decreed that the interviewer shall run riot in the land. As there are very decent, kindly, and even civil "interviewers," and as it is the part of wisdom to submit as gracefully as possible to the inevitable, a few rules may be laid down for the reception and treatment of those who are really not responsible for their errands, and a few more for the responsible themselves.

But before the interview proper, that is to say, the proper interview, is considered, let us condemn in strongest

ALLOW NO IMPERTINENCE

terms of loathing the improper interview. Never, on any account, hesitate to dismiss without the faintest concession a reporter who comes to the house of death, other affliction or disgrace. The newspaper that sends an interloper to wring hearts at moments of agony cannot be too severely reprimanded; the reporter whom it sends should bear the obloquy of being its representative. If such cases were summarily dealt with a few times, newspapers would have to learn that they must get their facts elsewhere than from the house of death, and from other lips than those of writhing mourners. If they can't get them at all, so much the better. The world would be improved by less knowledge of harrowing details of private griefs.

Never will your writer forget the

INEXCUSABLE CRUELTY

shock a certain paragraph on the subject of a scandal caused the reader. A young fellow, son of a respected citizen, a widower, whose only child the boy was, had eloped with an actress of doubtful fame. "Your reporter," wrote this enterprising sheet, "rang the doorbell of No. — Q—— avenue early this morning, and was ushered at once into the presence of the bereaved father. The old gentleman showed marks of a sleepless night. He was pacing the floor excitedly, while tears sprang to his eyes. 'Mr. B——,' the reporter said sadly, 'have you anything to say about this disgraceful report concerning your son?'"

This is a truthful transcript. Should such men be treated with decency?

There is, however, from motives which have no place here, a growing

CIVILITY IMPERATIVE

feeling in the minds of everybody, from the richest banker to the lowliest clerk, that the newspapers have got to have particulars of things, and that it has got to come out of the individual elected by them to catechise; that no one is safe from "investigation," and that the best way to do is to give as little as possible in the least satisfactory way. This is not the noblest tone to take in the matter. A better mode is to see the reporter, receive him (or her) politely, and give as much or as little information as you wish him (or her) to have. And if the errand is inoffensive, remember that the person bearing it is, after all, only earning an honest living in a disagreeable way. There is no reason, if you come to think of it, why a book-agent should be rudely treated. Everybody in the

HELP THE DESERVING

world knows cases of helpless women thrown on their own resources, who are advised to try book-prospecting, simply because nothing else offers. One may be offering an insult to the most sensitive of creatures. And many another lady or gentleman has been sent out on a prying errand to keep him or her from starvation. The etiquette in dealing with all strangers, unless they are suspected thieves, is to be perfectly polite to them. It is better policy to say, "I would give you items if I could, but unfortunately I have none to give you," than to order the servants to kick the reporter out of doors. The interview will not suffer as much, to begin with, and a newspaper grudge often crops out unexpectedly and does damage. Many kindly men and women, who treat rascally servants and scalp-

POLITENESS AND POLICY

ing shopkeepers with deference, because they are afraid of them, foam and bluster and class reporters as scamps and liars.

It pays to be polite to all.

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